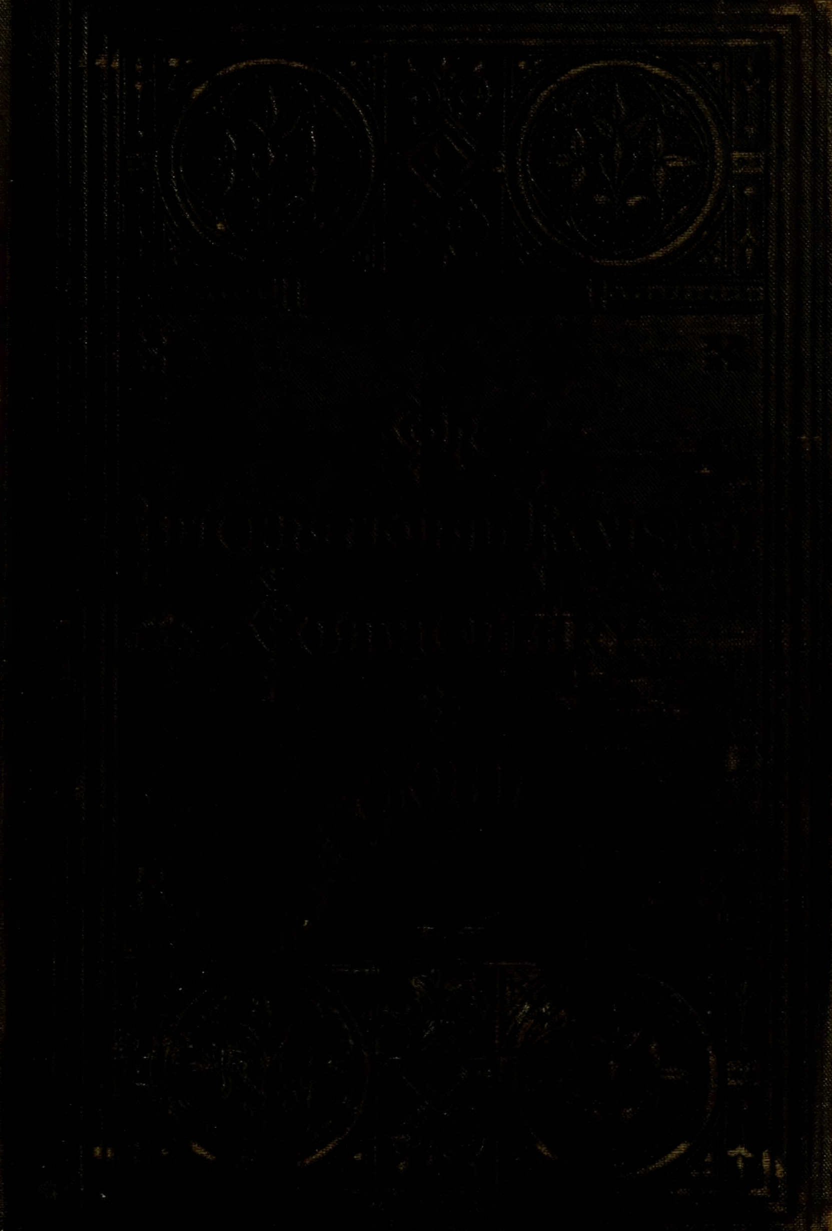

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EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D., LL.D.

*Professor of Sacred Literature in the Union Theological Seminary of New York,*
*President of the American Committee on Revision.*

VOL. IV.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

BY DR. MILLIGAN AND DR. MOULTON

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1883

# PREFACE.

THE Commentary on the Gospel of John by Dr. Milligan and Dr. Moulton is the result of long-continued, careful, independent, and reverential study. The authors were among the most active and influential members of the New Testament Revision Company, and helped to make the authoritative changes of reading and rendering in the Jerusalem Chamber which are here explained and vindicated. Bishop Lightfoot told me, I could not have selected two better scholars for this work in all England and Scotland.

In editing the small edition, I had only to adapt it to the Revised Version, and even this labor was greatly facilitated by the agreement of the notes with the new text in every essential point. In the later chapters, I was obliged to economize space by curtailing the text in the notes, where it is merely a literal repetition of the text at the head of the page.

I have occasionally ventured upon a brief addition in small type and in brackets (as on pp. 39, 55, 80, 301, 302, 322). Those who care for my own interpretation of particular passages can easily find it in my edition of Lange on John.

This Revision Commentary is now complete as far as the historical books are concerned.

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PHILIP SCHAFF.

NEW YORK, *Bible House, Sept.*, 1883.

# INTRODUCTION

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

It is obviously impossible, within the limits to which we must here confine ourselves, to treat with adequate fulness the many important and difficult questions relating to the Gospel of John; nor can we attempt to do more than indicate the leading points of inquiry, together with the grounds upon which we may rest in the confident assurance that that Gospel is really the production of 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' In endeavoring to do this, we shall approach the subject from its positive rather than its negative side, not dealing directly in the first instance with difficulties, but tracing the history of the Gospel downwards from the time when it was composed to the date at which it enjoyed the unquestioning recognition of the universal Church. Afterwards, turning to the contents of the Gospel, we shall speak of the purpose which its author had in view, and of the general characteristics of the method pursued by him in order to attain it. Such a mode of treatment seems best adapted to the object of an Introduction like the present. It will be as little as possible polemical; it will enable us to meet by anticipation, most certainly the most formidable, of the objections made to the authenticity of the Gospel; and it will put the reader in possession of those considerations as to its general character without which we cannot hope to understand it.

At the close of the Gospel (chap. 21: 24) we read, 'This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things.' These words (which are in all probability from the pen of John; see the Commentary) contain a distinct intimation on the part of the writer (comp. ver. 20) that he was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved;' and although that disciple is nowhere expressly named, we shall hereafter see that the Gospel itself leaves no room for doubt that he was the Apostle John.

### I. PERSONALITY OF THE WRITER.

This Apostle was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger, as there seems every reason to think, than his brother James. Of Zebedee we know little. He was a fisherman upon the Sea of Galilee, who pursued his occupation in common with his sons, and who continued it even after they had obeyed the summons of their Lord to follow Him (Matt. 4: 2[1]). Of Salome we fortunately know more. From John 19: 25 it would seem probable that she was a sister of the Virgin Mary (see the Commentary); but the fact need not be dwelt upon at present. It would not help us to understand better the ties that bound Jesus to her son; for these depended on spiritual sympathy rather than relationship by blood (Matt. 12: 48–50). But whether this bond of kindred existed or not, Salome manifested her devotion to Jesus by constant waiting upon her Lord, and by ministering to Him of her substance (Mark 15: 40; 16: 1). Nor can we fail to recognize her exhibition of the same spirit, mixed though it was in this instance with earthly elements, when she came to Jesus with the request that her two sons might sit, the one at His right hand, the other at His left, in His kingdom (Matt. 20: 21). That was not an act of proud ambition, or the request would have been made in private.* The zeal of a mother for her children's highest good was there, as well as an enthusiasm, not chilled even afterwards by the events at the cross and at the tomb (Mark 15: 40; 16: 1), for the cause of One whom she felt to be so worthy of her trust and love. The family of John does not seem to have been poor. Zebedee possessed hired servants (Mark 1: 20). Salome had substance of which to minister to our Lord during His life (Mark 15: 40; comp. Luke 8: 3), and with which to procure the materials for embalming Him after His death (Mark 16: 1). John was acquainted with the high priest (John 18: 15),—a fact at least harmonizing well with the idea that he did not belong to the lowest rank of the people; and at one time of his life, whatever may have been the case at other times, he possessed property of his own (John 19: 27).

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* Comp. Niemeyer, *Charakteristik*, p. 44.

It was in circumstances such as these that John received his training in the faith of his fathers; and, as that receptivity which in after life formed one of the most marked features of his character must have shown itself in the child and in the boy, we cannot doubt that, from his earliest years, he would imbibe in a greater than ordinary degree the sublime recollections and aspirations of Israel. We know, indeed, from his ready reference upon one occasion to the fire which the prophet Elijah commanded to come down from heaven, that the sterner histories of the Old Testament had taken deep possession of his mind; while his enthusiastic expectations of the coming glory of his people equally reveal themselves in his connection with that request of Salome of which we have already spoken. Apart from such specific instances, however, of John's acquaintance with the Old Testament (which, did they stand alone, might not prove much), it is worthy of notice that the books of the New Testament most thoroughly pervaded by the spirit of the older dispensation are two that we owe to the son of Salome,—the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. This remark is not to be confined to the latter of the two. A careful study of the former will show that it displays not only a much more intimate acquaintance with the Old Testament, but also a much larger appropriation of its spirit, than even that first Gospel by Matthew which was confessedly designed for Jewish Christians. Amidst all the acknowledged universalism of the Fourth Gospel, its thorough appreciation of the fact that the distinction between Jew and Gentile has forever passed away, and that lofty idealism by which it is distinguished, and which lifts its author far above every limitation of the favor of God to nation or class, the book is penetrated to the core by the noblest and most enduring elements of the Jewish faith. The writer has sunk himself into all that is most characteristic of what that faith reveals in regard to God, to man, and to the world, to the meaning and end of religious life. In addition to this, the figures of the Fourth Gospel are more Jewish than those of any book of the New Testament, except the Apocalypse. Its very language and style display a similar origin. No Gentile writer, either of the Apostolic or of the sub-Apostolic age, no Jewish writer even who had not long and lovingly appropriated the oracles of God given to his fathers, could have written as John has done

These remarks have an important bearing on what is said of the apostle in Acts 4: 13. We there read that when the Sanhedrin beheld his boldness they marvelled, perceiving that he was an 'unlearned and common man;' and it has often been maintained that one to whom this description is applicable cannot have been the author of the fourth Gospel. The true inference lies in the opposite direction. The words quoted mean only that he had not passed through the discipline of the Rabbinical schools; and certainly of such discipline the Fourth Gospel affords no trace. His education had been of a purer kind. He had grown up amidst the influences of home, of nature, of a trying occupation, of brave and manly toil. Therefore it was that, when, with an unfettered spirit, he came into contact with the great principles and germinal seeds which underlay the Old Testament dispensation,—above all, when he came into contact with the Word of Life, with Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets had spoken, he was able to receive Him, to apprehend Him, and to present Him to the world as he did.

It is in connection with the Baptist that we first hear of John. If Salome and Elizabeth were kinswomen (see above and comp. Luke 1: 36), John would naturally become acquainted with the remarkable circumstances attending the birth and training of the Baptist. At all events the stern teaching of the prophet, his loud awakening calls which rang from the wilderness of Judæa and penetrated to the whole surrounding country and to all classes of its society, his glorious proclamation that the long waited for kingdom was at hand, must have at once kindled into a flame thoughts long nourished in secret. John became one of His disciples (John 1: 35), and the impression produced upon Him by the Baptist was peculiarly deep. More truly than any of the earlier Evangelists he apprehends the evangelical ends to which, amidst all its sternness, the Baptist's mission really pointed. If the three bring before us with greater force the prophet of repentance reproving the sins of Israel, he on the other hand shows in a clearer light the forerunner of Jesus in his immediate relation to his Lord, and in his apprehension of the spiritual power and glory of His coming (comp. John 1: 26, 27; 3: 29, 30, with Matt. 3: 11, 12; Mark 1: 7, 8; Luke 3: 15–17).

The Baptist was the first to direct his disciple to Jesus (chap. 1: 36). In company with Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, he immediately followed Him, inquired of Him where He stayed, accompanied Him to His house, and remained with Him that day. What the subject of conversation was we are not informed, but the divine Sower had scattered His seed in the young ingenuous heart; and when shortly afterwards Jesus called him to the apostleship he immediately obeyed the summons (Matt. 4: 21, 22). From this time onward to the close of his Master's earthly career John was His constant follower, entering we cannot doubt into a closer union of spirit with Him than was attained by any other disciple. Not only was he one of the chosen three who were present at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, at the Transfiguration, and at the agony in Gethsemane (Luke 8: 51; 9: 28; Mark 14: 33); even of that small election he was, to use the language of the fathers, the most elect. He leaned upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, not accidentally,—but as the disciple whom He loved (John 13: 23); he pressed after Him into the court of Caiaphas at His trial (chap. 18: 15); he alone seems to have accompanied Him to Calvary (chap. 19: 26); to him Jesus committed the care of His mother at the cross (chap. 19: 26, 27); he was the first on the Resurrection morning, after hearing the tidings of Mary Magdalene, to reach the sepulchre (chap. 20: 4); and, when Jesus appeared after His Resurrection to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee, he first recognized the Lord (chap. 21: 7).

Little is related of John in the earlier Gospels. The chief incidents, in addition to those already mentioned, are his coming to Jesus and saying, 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us' (Luke 9: 49), and his receiving from Jesus, along with his brother James, the title of 'Son of Thunder' (Mark 3: 17),—a title given to denote not any possession of startling eloquence, but the power and vehemence of his character. It has indeed been urged by foes, and even admitted by friends, that such is not the character of the Apostle as it appears in the Fourth Gospel. But this is a superficial view. No doubt in chaps. 13–17, when the conflict is over and Jesus is alone with His disciples, we breathe the atmosphere of nothing but the most perfect love and peace. The other chapters of the Gospel, however, both before and after these, leave a different impression upon the mind. The 'Son of Thunder' appears in every incident, in every discourse which he records. To draw a contrast between the fire of youth as it appears in the John of the first three Evangelists and the mellowed gentleness of old age in the John of the fourth is altogether misleading. The vehement, keen, impetuous temperament is not less observable in the latter than in the former. We seem to trace at every step, while the conflict of Jesus with His enemies is described, the burning zeal of one who would call down fire from heaven upon the guilty 'Jews.'

The continued possession of the same character is at least entirely consistent with what is told us of John in the Acts of the Apostles; and it bursts forth again in all its early ardor in the traditions of the Church. John was present with Peter at the healing of the lame man (Acts 3: 1–11), and, although the address of the latter is alone recorded, he does not seem to have been silent on the occasion (chap. 4: 1). He exhibited the same boldness as his fellow-apostle in the presence of the Council (chap. 4: 13); joined him in the expression of his determination to speak what he had seen and heard (chap. 4: 19, 20); was probably at a later point committed with him to prison (chap. 5: 18), and miraculously delivered (chap. 5: 19); was brought again before the Sanhedrin (chap. 5: 27), and through the influence of Gamaliel, once more set free to resume his labors (chap. 5: 41, 42). After Samaria had been evangelized by Philip, he was sent to that city with Peter that they might complete the work begun (chap. 8: 14–17); and, this mission accomplished, he returned with him to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel at the same time in many villages of the Samaritans (chap. 8: 25). From this time we hear nothing of him until the first great Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15; Gal. 2). Then Paul found him in the holy city, regarded by the Christian community as one of the 'pillars' of the Church,—a circumstance which, combined with Paul's private explanations to those so named (Gal. 2: 2, 9), may justly lead to the inference that he still belonged to that portion of the Christian community which had not risen to the full conception of the independence and freedom of the Christian faith.

Scripture says nothing more of John's apostolic labors. It was now A. D. 50; and we have no further information regarding him until he appears, in the traditions of the Church, as Bishop of Ephesus, in the latter part of the first century. An attempt has indeed been recently made to cast doubt on John's residence at Ephesus, but there are few points in the history of early Christianity upon which tradition is so unanimous, and there need be no hesitation in accepting the statement. We do not know the exact date at which he went to this city. It can hardly have been during the life of Paul, or that Apostle would not, in accordance with his own principles of action, have connected himself so closely with the district (Rom. 15: 20; 2 Cor. 10: 16). The probability is that, deeply attached to Jerusalem, clinging to the memories associated with the labors and death of Jesus, he lingered in the sacred city until its destruction approached. Then he may have wandered forth from a place upon which the judgment of God had set his seal, and found his way to Ephesus. The traditions of the Church regarding him while he continued there possess singular interest, partly from the light thrown by them upon the times, partly from the touching pathos by which some of them are marked, mainly because they enable us so thoroughly to identify the aged Apostle with the youthful follower of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. Such is the story of his meeting with Cerinthus. It is said that the Apostle once entered the bath-house at Ephesus, and, discovering Cerinthus the heretic within, sprang forth exclaiming, 'Let us flee, lest even the bath-house fall in, since there is within it Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth.' Such also is the story of John and the young robber, one of the most beautiful stories of Christian antiquity, which we have no room to relate; and such the tradition that the Apostle, when too old to walk, was carried by his disciples into the midst of the congregation at Ephesus, only to repeat over and over again to his fellow-believers, 'Little children, love one another.' Other stories are told of him which may be omitted as less characteristic than these; but the general impression left by them all is not only that the early Church possessed a remarkably distinct conception of the personality of the apostle, but that its conception corresponded in the closest manner to the mingled vehemence and tenderness which come out so strongly in the picture of him presented by the earlier Gospels and by his own writings. From Ephesus, according to a tolerably unanimous, if rather indefinite tradition, which seems to be confirmed by Rev. 1: 9, John was banished for a time to the island of Patmos, a wretched rock in the Ægean Sea, but was afterwards permitted to return to the scene of his labors in Ephesus. It was under Nerva, it is said, that his return took place (A. D. 96–98), although he is also spoken of as having been alive after the accession of Trajan (A. D. 98). The days of the aged Apostle were now, however, drawing to a close. The companions of his earlier years, those whose eyes had seen and whose ears had heard Him who was the Word of Life, had been long since gathered to their rest. His time, too, was come. He had waited for more than threescore years to rejoin the Master whom he loved. He died and was buried at Ephesus; and with him closes the Apostolic age.

### II. AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL.

It is the almost unanimous tradition of the Church that the Apostle John wrote this Gospel. Our earliest authorities for the fact are Theophilus of Antioch (A. D. 175), Irenæus (A. D. 130–200), the Muratorian Fragment (A. D. 170–180), and Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 160–220). The accounts of these writers differ slightly from each other; but all agree in distinctly attributing our present Gospel to John; while the fourth, who is clearly independent of the other three, draws a remarkable distinction between it and the earlier Gospels, the latter being spoken of as containing 'the bodily things,' the former as 'a spiritual Gospel.' To the distinction thus drawn we shall presently return.

If, as the above-mentioned authorities lead us to infer, the Fourth Gospel was made public towards the close of the first century (and it is unnecessary to discuss here the question of an interval between the writing and the publication), we naturally look for quotations from or allusions to it in the writings that have come down to us from the period immediately following that date. These prove fewer than we might expect. Not, indeed, that they are wholly wanting. The acknowledged Epistles of Ignatius and the 'Shepherd' of Hermas, belonging respectively to the first twenty and the first forty years of the second century, exhibit a style of thought, sometimes even of language, closely connected with that of the Gospel. The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, again, a little later than the 'Shepherd,' and the writings of Papias before the middle of the second century, in bearing witness to the first Epistle as the work of John, lead us directly to the same conclusion in regard to the Gospel, for few will doubt that the two books are from the same hand. The account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, moreover, written in the middle of the same century, is so obviously modelled upon John's narrative of the death of Jesus, that that narrative must have been in possession of the Church before the 'Martyrdom' was penned. Finally, the Epistle to Diognetus

(A. D. 120), the address of Tatian to the Greeks (A. D. 160–180), the writings of Justin Martyr (A. D. 147–160), and the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons (A. D. 177), all of which seem with more or less clearness to quote from the Fourth Gospel, bring us down to the distinct statements of Theophilus, Irenæus, the Muratorian Fragment, and Clement, alluded to above, and to a date at which the testimonies to the Johannine authorship of the Gospel are as clear and full as can be desired.

The stream of allusion we have been following has flowed through the writings of the orthodox Church. But it is a remarkable fact, that allusions to our Gospel are still earlier and clearer in the heretical writings of the first half of the second century. This is especially the case with Basilides and his followers, as early as A. D. 125; and they are followed by the Valentinians, who can hardly be separated from their Master, Valentinus (A. D. 140), and by Ptolemæus and Heracleon (about A. D. 170–180), the last mentioned having even written a commentary upon the Gospel. To these facts may be added several important considerations. Thus, to quote the words of Bishop Lightfoot, 'when soon after the middle of the second century divergent readings of a striking kind occur in John's Gospel, we are led to the conclusion that the text has already a history, and that the Gospel therefore cannot have been very recent.' * Again, in the early years of the second half of the second century, the Gospel formed a part of the Syriac and old Latin translations of the New Testament, and as such was read in the public assemblies of the churches of Syria and Africa. Lastly, in the Paschal Controversies (about A. D. 160) there is hardly reason to doubt that the apparent discrepancy between this and the earlier Gospels, as to the date of the Last Supper of Jesus, played no small part in the dispute by which the whole Church was rent.

All these circumstances go far towards answering the allegation often made, that the paucity of allusions to the Fourth Gospel in the first seventy or eighty years after its publication is inconsistent with its authenticity. To present them thus, however, as an argument that the Gospel is authentic, is not only greatly to understate the case; it is even to put the reader upon a wrong track for arriving at

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* *On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, p. 20.

a positive conclusion. The real ground of conviction is the consistent belief of the Church. It is not for those who accept the Gospel to account for its admission into the canon of the last quarter of the second century, on the supposition that it is true; it is for those who reject it to account for this, on the supposition that it is false. The early Church was not a mass of individual units believing in Jesus, each in his own way nourishing in secrecy and independence his own form of faith. It was an organized community, conscious of a common foundation, a common faith, and common ordinances of spiritual nourishment for all persons in all lands who held the one Head, Christ Jesus. It was a body, every one of whose members sympathized with the other members: to every one of them the welfare of the whole was dear, and was moreover the most powerful earthly means of securing his own spiritual progress. The various generations of the Church overlapped one another; her various parts were united by the most loving relation and the most active intercourse; and all together guarded the common faith with a keenness of interest which has not been surpassed in any subsequent age of the Church's history. Even if we had not one probable reference to the Fourth Gospel previous to A.D. 170, we should be entitled to ask with hardly less confidence than we may ask now: How did this book find its way into the canon as the Gospel of John? How is it that the moment we hear of it, we hear of it everywhere, in France, Italy, North Africa, Egypt, Syria? No sooner do the sacred documents of any local church come to light than the Fourth Gospel is among them, is publicly read in the congregations of the faithful, is used as a means for nourishing the spiritual life, is quoted in controversies of doctrine, is referred to in disputes as to practice. It is simply an impossibility that this could have taken place within ten or thirty years after some single congregation of the wide-spread Church had accepted it from the hands of an unknown individual as (whether claiming to be so or not) the production of John the Apostle. In the controversies of later years it seems to us that the defenders of the Gospel have failed to do justice to their own position. They have not, indeed, paid too much attention to objectors, for many of these have been men of almost unrivalled learning and of a noble zeal for truth; but, by occupying themselves almost entirely with answers to objections, they have led men to regard the authenticity of the Gospel as an opinion to be more or less plausibly defended, rather than as a fact which rests upon that unvarying conviction of the Church which is the strongest of all evidence, and the falsehood of which no opponent has as yet been able to demonstrate. Let the faith, the life, the controversies, the worship of the Church about A. D. 170 be first accounted for without the Fourth Gospel, and it will then be more reasonable to ask us to admit that the small number of allusions to it in the literature of the preceding part of the century is a proof that the book had at that time no existence.

Many considerations, however, may be mentioned to explain that paucity of quotation and allusion upon which so great stress is laid. We notice only two. (1) The Fourth Gospel is considerably later in date than the other three. By the time it appeared the latter were everywhere circulated and appealed to in the Church. They had come to be regarded as the authoritative exposition of the life of the Redeemer. It could not be easy for a Gospel so different from them as is the fourth at once to take a familiar place beside them in the minds of men. Writers would naturally depend upon authorities to which they had been accustomed, and to which they knew that their readers had been in the habit of deferring. (2) A still more important consideration is the character of the book itself. May there not be good reason to doubt whether the Fourth Gospel, when first issued, would not be regarded as a theological treatise on the life of Jesus rather than as a simple narrative of what He said and did? It is at least observable that when Irenæus comes to speak of it he describes it as written to oppose Cerinthus and the Nicolaitanes (*Adv. Haer.* 3: 11, 1); and that when Clement of Alexandria gives his account of its origin he describes it as 'a spiritual gospel' written in contrast with those containing 'the bodily things' (in Euseb. *H. E.* 6: 14). It may be difficult to determine the exact meaning of 'spiritual' here, but it cannot be understood to express the *divine* as contrasted with the *human* in Jesus; and it appears more natural to think that it refers to the inner spirit in its contrast with the outward facts of His life as a whole. If so, the statement seems to justify the inference that the earlier Gospels had been considered the chief storehouse of information with regard to the actual events of the Saviour's history. What bears even more upon this conclusion is the manner in which Justin speaks. We have already quoted him as one of those to whom the Fourth Gospel was known, yet his description of the Saviour's method of address is founded upon the discourses in the Synoptic Gospels, quite inapplicable to those of the Fourth (*Apol.* 1: 14). Phenomena such as these make it probable that the Fourth Gospel was at first regarded as a presentation of spiritual truth respecting Jesus rather than as a simple narration similar to those already existing in the Church: and if so, the paucity of references to it, until it came to be better understood, is at once explained. The suggestion now offered finds some confirmation in a fact formerly mentioned, that the Gospel was a favorite one with the early heretics. Containing the truth, as it did, in a form in some degree affected by the speculations of the time and the country of its birth, it presented a larger number of points of contact for their peculiar systems than the earlier Gospels. In it they found many a hint which they could easily develop and misuse. Its profound metaphysical character was exactly suited to their taste; and they welcomed the opportunity, as we see from the *Refutations of Hippolytus* (Clark's translation, 1: p. 276), of appealing to so important and authoritative a document in favor of their own modes of thought. But this very circumstance must have operated against its quick and general reception by the Church. The tendency, if there was room for it at all, would be to doubt a writing in which systems destructive of the most essential elements of Christianity claimed to have support; and it helps to deepen our sense of the strength of the Church's conviction of the divine origin of our Gospel, that, in spite of the use thus made of it, she clung to it without the slightest hesitation and with unyielding tenacity.

In reviewing the first seventy years of the second century, a period at the end of which it must not be forgotten that the Fourth Gospel is generally and unhesitatingly acknowledged to be the work of John, we can trace no phenomena inconsistent with such a conclusion. No other theory gives an adequate explanation of the facts. Unless, therefore, the structure and contents of the Gospel can be shown to be inconsistent with this view, we are manifestly bound to accept the testimony of the early Church as worthy of our confidence. According to that testimony the Gospel was written, or at least given to the Church at Ephesus, towards the close of the apostle's life. There is nothing to determine with certainty the particular date. The probabilities are in favor of fixing it about A. D. 90.

Turning now to the *internal character* of the Gospel, we shall find that, if carefully examined, it is not only consistent with, but strongly confirmatory of, the Johannine authorship.

1. *The author was unquestionably a Jew.* Some most marked peculiarities of the Gospel, such as its artificial arrangement and its teaching by symbolic action (points of which we have yet to speak more fully), not only are strictly Jewish, but have nothing corresponding to them in any Gentile writer of the age. Nor does this book contain one word to suggest the inference that its author, originally a Gentile, might have acquired his Jewish thoughts and style by having become, before his conversion to Christianity, a proselyte to Judaism. To such an extent do these features permeate the Gospel, that they cannot be the result of later and acquired habits of thought. They are the soul of the writing. They are interwoven in the most intimate manner with the personality of the writer. They must have grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength before he could be so entirely moulded by them. Nothing shows this more than the relation which exists in the Gospel between Christianity and Judaism. The use of the expression 'the Jews,' when properly understood, implies the very contrary of what it is so often adduced to establish. It would be simply a waste of time to argue that our Lord's conflict with 'the Jews' was not a conflict with Judaism. But, this being so, the use of the expression becomes really a measure of the writer's indignation against those who, having been appointed the guardians of a lofty faith, had dimmed, defaced, and caricatured it. Such expressions as 'A feast of the Jews,' 'The Passover of the Jews,' 'The manner of the purifying of the Jews,' 'The Jews' feast of Tabernacles,' and so on, not only could well be used by a writer of Jewish birth, but are even consistent with true admiration of the things themselves when conformed to their ideal. He has in view institutions as perverted by man, not as appointed by the Almighty. He sees them observed and urged by their defenders for the sake of their own selfish interests, made instruments of defeating the very end for which they had been originally given, used to deepen the darkness rather than to lead to the coming light. He sees that that stage in the history of a faith has been reached when the form has so completely taken the place of the substance, the letter of the spirit, that to revivify the former is impossible: it must perish if the latter is to be saved. He sees the

spirituality of religion crushed, extinguished, in the very moulds which had for a time preserved it. Therefore he might well say, Their work is done: God's plan is accomplished: they must perish. In all this there is no antagonism to true Judaism. No Gentile authorship is before us. The thought belongs to a different training and a different race; and that, too, at a time when Judaism must have possessed much of its former interest, when the echoes of its greatness had not yet passed away.

The same thing appears in the relation of the writer to the Old Testament Scriptures. They are quoted with great frequency, and it is well worthy of notice that the quotations are not simply taken from the Septuagint. They are at times from the Hebrew where it differs from the Septuagint; at times the translation is original (comp. chaps. 2: 17; 12: 40; 19: 37; 13: 18). Nothing leads more directly than this to the thought not only of Jewish birth, but also of long familiarity with Jewish worship in Palestine. In all the provinces at least of the Western *Diaspora*, the service of the synagogue was conducted not in Hebrew, but in Greek, by means of the Septuagint. To Gentiles of all conditions of life, and similarly to Jews of the Dispersion, with the exception of a very few, the Hebrew Scriptures were, even in the apostolic age, and certainly at a later date, utterly unknown. To think of a Gentile Christian of the first half of the second century, whether a native of Alexandria or of Asia Minor, as able to translate for himself, is to suppose a state of things of which no other illustration can be adduced, and which is at variance with all our knowledge of the time.

The same conclusion is to be deduced from the Hebraic style of the book. This character of its style is now generally recognized. But the fact is of such interest and importance, yet at the same time so dependent upon a skilled and delicate acquaintance with both Hebrew and Greek, that instead of quoting examples which the English reader would hardly understand, we shall refer to two, out of many, statements from writers whose authority on such a point none will question. It is thus that Dr. Keim [the author of a very able and learned Life of Jesus] speaks: 'The style of the book is a remarkable combination of a facility and skill essentially Greek,. with a form of expression that is truly Hebrew in its complete simplicity, childlikeness, picturesqueness, and in some sense guilelessness.'* To a similar effect Ewald [the greatest Hebrew scholar of the nineteenth century]: 'It is well worthy of our observation that the Greek language of our author bears the clearest and strongest marks of a genuine Hebrew who, born among Jews in the Holy Land, and having grown up among them, had learned the Greek language in later life, but still exhibits in the midst of it the whole spirit and air of his mother tongue. He has constructed a Greek tongue to which nothing corresponds in the other writings that have come down to us marked by a Hellenistic tinge.' *

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* *Jesus von Nazara*, i., p. 157.

2. *The author belonged to Palestine.* He is alive to all the geographical, ecclesiastical, and political relations of the land. He speaks of its provinces—Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. He is familiar with its towns—Jerusalem, Bethany, Sychar, Cana, Nazareth, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Tiberias, Ephraim; and not less so with its river Jordan and its winter-torrent Kedron. The general character of the country is known to him, the different routes from Judæa into Galilee (chap. 4: 4), the breadth of the sea of Galilee (chap. 6: 19; comp. Mark 6: 47), the lie of the road from Cana to Capernaum (chap. 2: 12), the exact distance between Jerusalem and Bethany (chap. 11: 18). The situation of particular spots is even fixed with great distinctness, such as of Jacob's well in chap. 4, of Bethesda in chap. 5, and of Cana in chap. 2.

Similar remarks apply to his acquaintance with the ecclesiastical and political circumstances of the time. It is not possible to illustrate this by details. We add only that all his allusions to such points as we have now noticed are made, not with the labored care of one who has mastered the subject by study, but with the simplicity and ease of one to whom it is so familiar that what he says is uttered in the most incidental manner. Where did he obtain his information? Not from the Old Testament, for it is not there. Not from the earlier Gospels, for they afford but little of it. Surely not from that second century which, according to the statement of objectors, left him in the belief that appointment to the high-priesthood was an annual thing! One source of knowledge alone meets the demands of the case. The writer was not only a Jew, but a Jew of Palestine.

3. *The author was an eye-witness of what he relates.* We have his own explicit statement upon the point in chap. 1: 14 and chap. 19: 35

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* *Die Johann. Schriften*, i., p. 44.

(see the Commentary). Upon this last verse we only call attention now to the distinction, so often overlooked, between the two adjectives of the original, both translated 'true' in the Authorized Version, but wholly different in meaning. The first does not express the truth of the fact at all, but sets forth the fact as one in regard to which the witness was not, and cannot have been, mistaken: his testimony is all that testimony can be. The moment we give its due weight to this consideration, we are compelled to admit that 'he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witnesss is true,' can refer to no other than the writer of the words. He could not have thus alleged of another that his testimony was thoroughly true and perfect—that it was the exact expression of the incident which had taken place. What he himself has seen is the only foundation of such a 'witness' as that which he would give.

The statements thus made are confirmed by the general nature of the work. There is a graphic power throughout the whole, a liveliness and picturesqueness of description, which constrain us to believe that we are listening to the narrative of an eye-witness. There is a delicacy in the bringing out of individual character (as in the case of Martha and Mary in chap. 11) which even the literary art of the present day could hardly equal. And there is a minuteness of detail, different from that of the earlier Gospels, for whose presence it is altogether impossible to account unless it was suggested by the facts. If the trial before Pilate is an imaginary scene, there is nothing in all the remains of Greek antiquity to compare with it.

4. *The author, if an eye-witness and a disciple of Jesus, could be no other than the Apostle John.* We have already seen that he calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' But from such passages as chaps. 13: 23; 19: 26, we infer that the disciple so peculiarly favored must have been one of those admitted to the most intimate communion with Jesus. These were only three, Peter, James and John. One of these three, therefore, he must have been. He was not Peter, for that apostle is frequently mentioned in the Gospel by his own name, and is on several occasions expressly distinguished from 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' (chaps. 13: 24; 21: 7, 20). Neither was he James, for that apostle was put to death by Herod at a date long anterior to any at which our Gospel can have been composed (Acts 12: 2). He could therefore only be John.

Internal evidence thus lends its force to the external for the conclusion that we advocate. That there are no difficulties in the matter, or that they are slight, it would be foolish to allege. They are both numerous and weighty. But it seems to us that they are connected less with the actual state of the evidence than with the fact that the true character of the Fourth Gospel has usually been overlooked by those who, in this country at least, have defended its authenticity. In this respect we owe much to the very continental scholars who have been most unfriendly to its apostolic origin. None have contributed so greatly to unfold its true character; and, in doing so, they have helped most powerfully, however unconsciously, to answer their own objections to the Johannine authorship. That authorship there is no reasonable ground to doubt.

### III. OBJECT OF THE GOSPEL.

The Gospel of John is the production of that apostle who, of all the apostolic band, had been most closely and tenderly associated with their common Master. Why was it written?

We have already had occasion to mention some of the early testimonies bearing upon this point. We must now refer to them again.

Eusebius quotes Clement of Alexandria as saying that 'John, the last of the Apostles, perceiving that the bodily things (of Jesus) had been made known in the Gospels, and being at the same time urged by his friends, and borne along by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel.' And a still earlier authority (the Muratorian Fragment) so far agrees with this as to tell us that 'when John's fellow-disciples and bishops exhorted him he said, Fast along with me three days from to-day, and let us relate the one to the other whatever has been revealed to us. The same night it was revealed to Andrew the Apostle that John should in his own name write down the whole, and that they all should revise (what he wrote).' The two accounts, while obviously independent, bear witness to the same view of the origin of our Gospel. The friends of the Apostle—how impossible that it should be otherwise!—had often heard him relate much that was not found in the Gospels already in existence. They urged him to put it in writing, and he complied with their request. In other words, the Fourth Gospel was written as a supplement to its predecessors. Up to a certain point the idea may be accepted; but that John wrote mainly for the purpose of supplying things wanting in the Synoptic narrative is a theory inconsistent with the whole tone of his composition. His work is from first to last an original conception, distinguished from previous Gospels alike in the form and in the substance of its delineation, proceeding upon a plan of its own clearly laid down and consistently followed out, and presenting an aspect of the person and teaching of Jesus which, if not entirely new, is set before us with a fulness which really makes it so. It is one burst of sustained and deep appreciation of what its writer would unfold, the picture of one who paints not because others have failed to catch the ideal he would represent, but because his heart is full and he must speak.

On the other hand, it was the opinion of Irenæus that John wrote to controvert the errors of the Nicolaitanes and Cerinthus; in other words, that his aim was not so much supplementary as *polemical.* Up to a certain point, again, the idea may be accepted; but it is impossible to believe that it affords us the whole, or even the main explanation of his work. His presentation of Jesus might no doubt be moulded by the tone of thought around him, because he had himself been moulded by it. Yet he starts from a positive, not from a controversial point of view. Filled with his subject, he is impelled to set it forth without turning aside to show, as a controversialist would have done, that it met the deficiencies or errors of his age. Upon these he makes no direct attack. It may be in the light of the present that the truth shapes itself to his mind; yet he writes as one whose main business is not to controvert the present but to revivify the past.

Neither of these statements, then, explains the Apostle's aim. He has himself given the explanation, and that so clearly that it is difficult to account for the differences of opinion that have been entertained. His statement is, 'Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name' (chap. 20: 30, 31). Almost every word of this statement is of the utmost importance for the point before us. But, referring for fuller exposition to the Commentary, we now only remark that John is not to be understood as meaning that the Gospel was written in order that its readers might be led to acknowledge the Divine mission of Jesus, when they beheld the works wrought by Him in more than human power. These readers were already believers, disciples, friends. What was wanted was not the first formation but the deepening of faith within them, so that they might reach a profounder appreciation of the true character of Jesus, a more intimate communion with Him and in Him with the Father, and thus also a richer and more abundant spiritual life (comp. chap. 10: 10).

The conclusion now reached will be strengthened if we observe that, with a characteristically firm grasp of his materials, and with that remarkable unity of plan which distinguishes the Gospel, John manifests the same intention at the first appearance of the Redeemer in his history. In his first chapter we read of three, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael, who, having been brought face to face with Jesus, make confession of their faith. It is impossible to overlook the parallelism between this paragraph and chap. 20: 30, 31. The three disciples bear witness to the three aspects of the Saviour brought before us in the Evangelist's own summary of his work—'Jesus,' 'the Christ,' 'the Son of God.' The similarity is an important testimony to the fact that that summary is not one for which he might have substituted another, but that it is the calm, self-possessed utterance of a writer who had from the first a clear perception of the end which he kept in view throughout.

To the question, therefore, Why did John write? we may now reply: He wrote in order to present to believing men a revelation of the Divine Son which might deepen, enlarge, perfect their faith, and which, by bringing them into closer spiritual communion with the Son, might make them also in Him spiritually sons of God. He wrote to exhibit, in the actual facts of the life of the 'Word become flesh,' the glory of that union which had been established in His person between the Divine and the human. He wrote to be a witness to the heart of One who is in His people, and in whom the Father abides (chaps. 14: 10; 17: 23).

## IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL.

Having thus ascertained the purpose with which the Fourth Gospel was written, we shall now be better able to appreciate some of those characteristics which have furnished opponents with many plausible objections, and have occasioned no small perplexity to friends. Of these the following seem to deserve notice, either as being in themselves the most important, or as being frequently made use of in this Commentary:—

(1). *The selective principle upon which the Evangelist proceeds.* No historian can mention all the particulars of any whole life, or even of any single event that he records. To a certain extent he is bound to select those which, from whatever cause, strike him most or seem to bear most closely on his purpose. But the writer of the Fourth Gospel gives many proofs that he not only carries this principle to an unusual extent, but does it deliberately and on purpose. The incidents looked at as a whole will in part illustrate what we say. That these should constitute a group so different from what we have in the earlier Gospels is often urged as an objection to the authenticity of the Fourth. Those indeed who make the objection lose sight of the fact that there is selection of incidents as truly in the former as in the latter. The difference between the two cases lies less in the extent to which selection is carried, than to a degree of consciousness with which the principle is applied. In the Synoptic Gospels it is less easy to trace the hand of the writer as he puts aside what does not appear to him to bear upon his subject, or as he brings into prominence what has direct relation to his aim. Abstaining, however, from any comparison between our two groups of authorities, and confining ourselves to the Fourth Gospel, we rather notice that the selection of its incidents in general is determined by the ideas to which expression is given in the Prologue. It is not through forgetfulness or ignorance of other incidents that the writer confines our attention to a selected few (comp. 21: 25), but through his conviction that no others will as well subserve the end that he has in view. Hence, accordingly, the space devoted to the discourses with 'the Jews,' which are not those of a mild and gentle teacher, but of one who is in conflict with bitter and determined foes, of one whose business it is to confute, to convict, and to condemn. No one, giving heed to the state of Jewish feeling at the time, can doubt that these discourses in their general strain have all the verisimilitude that outward evidence can lend to them,—that the teaching of Jesus must have been a struggle, and in precisely this direction. The conflict between light and darkness became thus to John a leading idea of the history of his Master. The thought finds expression in the Prologue (1: 5–11), and the discourses which illustrate it naturally follow. It is not otherwise with the miracles. He invariably styles these 'signs,' a word in itself showing that they are outward acts expressive of a hidden meaning from which they derive their chief importance. Why, then, does he give them as he does? Because, looking over the whole manifestation of Jesus, he had been taught to find in Him the fulfilment of 'grace and truth' which had not been given in the law,—the perfect Light, the present and eternal Life, of men. He presents these ideas in the Prologue (1: 4, 5, 9, 17), and the selection given of the miracles naturally follows.

The point now before us may be illustrated, not only by the incidents of the Gospel looked at thus generally, but by smaller and more minute particulars. Many of these, however, will be noticed in the Commentary (see, for example, the note on 9 : 6), and we shall not occupy time with them now. The point to be borne in mind by the reader is, that in the Gospel of John there is no attempt to give the historical facts of the life of Jesus in all their particulars. There is throughout conscious and intentional *selection.* From what he has seen, the writer has attained a particular idea of the Person, the Life, the Work of his Divine Master. He will present that idea to the world; and knowing that, if all the things that Jesus did were to be written down, 'the world itself would not contain the books that should be written,' he makes choice of that which will most fitly answer the appointed end.

(2.) *The symbolic method of treatment which the Evangelist exhibits.* This is so peculiarly characteristic of John, and has at the same time been so much disregarded by most modern commentators, that one or two general remarks upon teaching by symbols seemed to be required. The Old Testament is full of it. All the arrangements of the tabernacle, for example; its courts, the furniture of its courts, the ceremonial observances performed in it, the very dyes and colors used in the construction of its wrappings, have an appropriate meaning only when we behold in them the expression of spiritual truths relating to God and to His worship. More especially it would seem to have been a part of the *prophet's* task thus to present truth to those whom he was commissioned to instruct; and the higher the prophetic influence which moved him, the more powerful his impression of the message given him to proclaim, the more entirely he was borne along by the divine afflatus, the more did he resort to it. As simple illustrations of this we may refer to the cases of Zedekiah, Elisha, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (1 Kings 22: 11; 2 Kings 13: 17; Jer. 27: 1–18; Ezek. 4: 1–6).

If it was thus under the Old Testament dispensation, there is not only no reason why we ought not to expect symbolism in the New Testament, but every reason to the contrary. The narrative of Agabus shows that in the apostolic age symbolic action was still a part of the prophetic function appreciated by the Jews (Acts 21: 11). What wonder, then, if our Lord should teach by symbolism as well as by direct instruction? He was the fulfilment not only of Israel's priestly, but also of its prophetic line. He was the true and great Prophet in whom the idea and mission of prophecy culminated; in whom all that marked the prophet as known and honored in Israel attained its highest development and reached perfect ripeness. Besides this, His eye saw, as no merely human eye ever did, the unity that lies at the bottom of all existence, the principles of harmony that bind together the world of nature and of man, so that the former becomes the type and shadow of the latter. When, accordingly, He appeared as the great Prophet of Israel, there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that He would teach by symbol as well as word, that not only His words but His acts should be designed by Him to be lessons to the people, illustrations of the nature of His kingdom and His work.

Still further, we cannot forget the general character of all the words and actions of our Lord. As coming from Him, they possess a fulness of meaning which we should not have been justified in ascribing to them had they come from another teacher. It is impossible to doubt that He *saw* all the truths which find a legitimate expression in what He said or did, however various the sphere of life to which they apply. And it is equally impossible to doubt that He intended to *utter* what He saw.

But if Jesus might thus teach, a disciple and historian of His life might apprehend this characteristic of His teaching,—nay, would apprehend it, the more he entered into the spirit of his master. There are clear indications of this, accordingly, even in the earlier Gospels. The account of the miraculous draught of fishes, at the time when Simon and Andrew were called to the apostleship (Luke 5: 3–10), the cursing of the barren fig-tree (Matt. 21: 18–20; Mark 11: 12–14), the double miracle of the multiplying of the bread (Matt. 14: 15–21; 15:

32–38; Mark 6: 34–44; 8: 1–9), afford clear illustrations of this principle. It is in the Fourth Gospel, however, that the symbolic spirit particularly appears; and that not merely in the miracles, but in lengthened narratives, and in many separate figures supplied by the Old Testament, by nature, or by incidents occurring at the moment. To the eye of the Evangelist the whole of creation waits for redemption; the whole of history reaches forth to Him 'that was to come;' the heart of man in all its stirrings seeks to grasp a reality to be found nowhere but in the revelation of the Father given in the Son. Everything, in short, has stamped upon it a shadowy outline of what is to be filled up when redemption is complete. The Logos, the Word, is the source of all that exists (chap. 1: 3), and to the source from which it came will all that exists return. Every chapter of the Gospel would furnish illustration of what has been said.

It is impossible, however, to rest here; for this power of perceiving in outward things symbols of inner truths may be so strong as to appear in the mode of presenting not only the larger but also the smaller circumstances of any scene in which Jesus moves. The greater may draw along with it a symbolic interpretation of the less. Nay, out of numerous little details the mind which is quick to discern symbolic teaching may really select some in preference to others, because in them the impress of the symbolism may be more clearly traced. A writer may thus act without any thought of art or special design, even to a great degree unconscious of what he does, and simply because the higher object with which he has been engaged has a natural power to attract to itself, and to involve in its sweep the lower objects within its range. Illustrations of this will be found in the Commentary.

(3.) *The peculiar nature of the plan adopted by the Evangelist.* The Gospel appears to us most naturally to divide itself into seven sections, as follows:—

1. The Prologue: chap. 1: 1–18. These verses contain a summary of the great facts of the whole Gospel, grouped in accordance with the Evangelist's purpose, and presented in the light in which he would have them viewed.

2. The presentation of Jesus upon the field of human history: chap. 1: 19–2: 11. Here Jesus appears before us as He is in Himself, the Son of God, and as He manifests Himself to His disciples before He begins His conflict in the world.

3. General sketch of the work of Jesus in the world: chap. 2: 12–4: 54. Jesus passes beyond the circle of the disciples, and is rejected by the Jews when he would cleanse the house of His Father at Jerusalem. This leads to His revelation of Himself as the true temple which, destroyed by 'the Jews' in their persecution of Him even unto death, shall be raised again in His resurrection. Thus rejected by the representatives of the theocracy, He reveals Himself by His word to individuals who, whether of Judea, or Samaria, or Galilee of the nations, are—not by signs but by His word—subdued to faith.

4. The conflict of Jesus with the world, chap. 5: 1–12: 50. This section contains the main body of the Gospel, setting Jesus forth in the height of His conflict with darkness, error, and sin. He comes before us throughout in all the aspects in which we have in the Prologue been taught to behold Him, and He carries on the work there spoken of as given Him to do. He is Son of God, and Son of man, the Fulfiller of the greatest ordinances of the law, the Life and the Light of men. As He contends with the world, now in one and now in another of these manifestations of Himself, faith or unbelief is gradually developed and deepened in those who listen to Him. The believing and obedient are more and more attracted, the disobedient and unbelieving are more and more repelled, by His words and actions, until at last we hear, in the closing verses of chap. 12, the mournful echo of 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' He has gathered His disciples to Himself. The darkness has not overcome Him (comp. chap. 1: 5). He passes victorious through its opposition; but His victory is not yet complete.

5. The revelation of Jesus to His own, together with the rest and peace and joy of faith: chap. 13: 1–17: 26. The conflict of the previous section has divided men into the two great companies of faith and unbelief. These two companies are now to be followed, the one to its blessed rest in Him whom it has received, the other to those last steps in sin which, in the hour of apparent victory, really secure its final and ignominious defeat. The rest of faith is traced in the section now before us. The world is shut out from the sacred and tender fellowship of Jesus with His own. Judas leaves the company of the disciples (13: 30). The rest of the disciples are 'clean;' not only bathed, but with their feet afterwards washed, so that they are 'clean every whit' (13: 10), and Jesus is alone with them. Therefore He

pours forth upon them all the fulness of His love. His glory—the glory of 'grace and truth'—shines forth in all the inexpressible tenderness of the foot-washing, of the last discourse, and of the intercessory prayer.

6. The apparent victory but the real defeat of unbelief: 18 : 1–20 : 31. At first sight it may be thought that chap. 20 as containing the account of the Resurrection, ought to constitute a separate section; but it is of the utmost importance for a proper comprehension of the plan of the Evangelist to observe that this cannot be. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus are in this Gospel always united, and cannot be separated in our thought; the Redeemer with whom we have to do is One who rises through suffering to victory, through death to life (comp. remarks on the contents of chap. 20). Even the prominent thought of chap. 19 is not Jesus in humiliation, but Jesus 'lifted on high,' rising triumphant above the humiliation to which He is subjected, with a glory which appears the brighter the thicker the darkness that surrounds it. But this is exactly the thought of chap. 20 ; and the two chapters cannot be kept distinct. Thus viewed, we see in the section as a whole the apparent victory, but the real defeat of unbelief. The enemies of Jesus seem to prevail. They seize Him; they bind Him; they lead Him before Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate; they nail Him to the cross; He dies and is buried. But their victory is only on the surface.' Jesus Himself gives Himself up to the traitor and his band; offers no resistance to the binding; shows the infinite superiority of His spirit to that of the high priest; compels the homage of Pilate; voluntarily surrenders His life upon the cross; has the mocking of His enemies turned, under the providence of God, to their discomfiture and shame; and at last, rising from the grave, establishes the completeness of His victory when His enemies have done their worst. In short, throughout this section we are continually reminded that the triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment, and that God judgeth in the earth.

7. The Epilogue: chap. 21. In this section we see the spread of the Church; the successful ministry of the Apostles when, at the word of Jesus, they cast their net into the great sea of the nations; the satisfaction and joy experienced by them in the results of protracted toil. Finally, we see in it the reinstitution in the person of Peter of Christian witness-bearing to Jesus, together with the intimation of the

certain approach of that glorious time when the need of such testimony, with all its labors and sufferings, shall be superseded by the Second Coming of the Lord.

Such appears to be the plan of the Fourth Gospel,—a plan vindicated by the narrative itself, and having each of its sections marked off from the others by lines too distinct to be mistaken.

When, accordingly, we recall what has been already said as to the leading aim of the Fourth Gospel, we can have little difficulty in understanding the influence which that aim exerts upon the selection of particulars and upon the structure of the narrative as a whole. If in this Gospel pre-eminently Jesus reveals Himself with so much frequency and fulness, we have seen that this is the very truth which the Evangelist has set himself to unfold. Its prominence can throw no suspicion upon the historical reality of the representation. We are prepared to find in this Gospel a revelation of Jesus and His own glory different both in manner and degree from that presented in the earlier Gospels.

The considerations that have now been adduced with regard to the history of the Fourth Gospel, the external and internal evidence bearing upon its Johannine authorship, and the striking peculiarity of the characteristics by which it is marked, seem sufficient to satisfy every reasonable inquirer that the uniform tradition of the Church, pointing to the Apostle John as its author, is correct. It is not to be denied, however, that there remain difficulties, some of a general nature, others arising out of special details contained in the Gospel itself. Our readers will readily acknowledge that it is wholly impossible within our limits to treat these with a fulness worthy of their importance. Of the second class of difficulties, too, it is less necessary to speak, for they will naturally present themselves as we comment on the text of the Gospel. Perhaps the only points that require notice in an Introduction are two belonging to the first class,—the relation in which the Fourth Gospel stands (1) to the Apocalypse, (2) to the earlier Gospels. The first of these must be deferred until the Apocalypse comes under our notice in this work. Upon the second we say a few words in bringing this Introduction to a close.

### V. RELATION OF THE FOURTH TO THE EARLIER GOSPELS.

This relation is often supposed to be one of irreconcilable divergence, and the divergence is found not only in particular statements in which the Fourth Gospel touches the others, but in the history as a whole. Alleged differences of the first kind will be noticed when we meet them in the course of exposition. Looking, therefore, only at the history as a whole, the reader will easily observe that the apparent divergence runs in two main lines, one having reference to the outward framework, the other to the portraiture of Jesus, in Himself and in His discourses. As to the first of these, in its two branches, the *scene* and the *duration* of the ministry, little need be said. It is true that in the earlier Gospels the scene, up to the Passion week, appears to be Galilee alone, while in the Fourth it is even more Jerusalem and Judæa; that in the former the duration seems less than one year, in the latter more than two. Yet it is to be borne in mind that no one of our narratives professes to give a complete history of the life of our Lord upon earth. Their fragmentariness is one of their essential characteristics, admitted by all in the case of the Synoptists, distinctly declared by John in his own case (chap. 20: 30, 21: 25). All, therefore, that we are entitled to ask is, that the earlier Gospels shall leave room for the larger area and the longer time borne witness to by the latter; and this they do.

There is more, however, to be said; for our different groups of authorities mutually imply the labors of Jesus in those portions of the land of Palestine which occupy a subordinate position in their own narratives. It is unnecessary to prove this with regard to John, so frequent is the mention made by him of the ministry in Galilee. The notices of the others with regard to the Judæan ministry are not so plain; but even in them there occur passages which are unintelligible, except on the supposition that such a ministry had existed. Such passages are Matt. 23: 37 (comp. Luke 13: 34), where the words 'how often' are almost conclusive upon the point; Matt. 21: 8, indicating a previous acquaintance to account for the enthusiasm; Luke 10: 38–42, referring most probably to Bethany; while, if in Luke 4: 44 we accept the reading, 'And He preached in the synagogues of *Judæa*,'—and the evidence in its favor seems to be overwhelming,—the whole controversy is set at rest. It may be added that the words of Peter in Acts 10: 37–39 have an important bearing upon the point; and that all the probabilities of the case are opposed to the supposition either that Jesus would confine Himself to Galilee, or that the great drama of His life and death could have been enacted in less than a single year.

More important than the outward framework of the history is the portraiture of Jesus presented in the Fourth Gospel; and this again may be naturally divided into two branches, the *Person* and the *discourses.* As to the first of these, it is no doubt in John alone that we meet with the conception of Jesus as the Logos, or Word of God. Yet there is ample ground to justify the conclusion that it is not the object of the writer so to delineate Jesus as to make the Logos conception the dominating conception of His personality. The remark has often been made, that in the whole course of the Gospel Jesus does not once apply the designation of Logos to Himself,—neither in the three aspects of Jesus already spoken of as prominent in chap. 1: nor in the closing summary of chap. 20: 31, is the Logos mentioned; and no passage can be quoted in which the fact that Jesus is the Logos is associated with 'witness' borne to Him. This last fact has not been sufficiently noticed, but its importance appears to us to be great. If there is one characteristic of the Fourth Gospel more marked than another, it is the perfect and absolute simplicity with which the writer, whether speaking of himself, of Jesus, or of the Baptist, resolves the proclamation of what is uttered into 'witness' or 'bearing witness.' That term includes in it the whole burden of the commission given to each of them to fulfil. Whatever else they may be, they are first and most of all 'witnesses.' But if so, and if to enforce the Logos idea be the main purpose of the Gospel so far as it refers to the Person of Christ, we may well ask why that idea and 'witness' borne to it are never brought together? Jesus is witnessed to as 'the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ,' as the one 'of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did speak,' as 'the Son of God, the King of Israel;' he is not witnessed to as the Logos, although he *is* the Logos; and that single fact is sufficient to prove that the fourth Evangelist has no thought of presenting his Master in a light different from that in which He is presented by his predecessors.

In addition to this it may be observed that we have in our two groups of Gospels, the very same interchange of allusions with regard to the Person of Christ that we have already observed when speaking of the scene of the ministry. If in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is pre-eminently Son of God, He is not less distinctly Son of man. If, again, in the earlier Gospels He is pre-eminently Son of man, He at the same time performs acts and claims authority not human but Divine. He forgives sins (Matt. 9: 6), is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12: 8), rises from the dead (Matt. 17: 9), comes in His kingdom) Matt. 16: 28), sits upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 19: 28); nay, in one passage He speaks of Himself as Son of man at the very time when He appropriates as true the confession of Peter, that He is 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matt. 16: 13–28). Many other passages in the earlier Gospels lead to the same conclusion; so that, although the teaching of the Fourth as to the Divine nature of Jesus is richer than theirs, the truth itself, so far from being excluded from our minds, must be taken along with us in reading them before they can be properly understood. Without it, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to combine their expressions into a consistent whole.

If now we turn from the Person to the *discourses* of Christ, as these are presented in the Fourth Gospel, it is impossible to deny that they differ widely from those of the earlier Gospels, both in form and in substance. In the earlier Gospels the truths taught by our Lord are for the most part set before us in a manner simple and easily understood, in parables, in short pithy sayings, in sentences partaking largely of the proverbial and not difficult to remember, in a style adapted to the popular mind. In the Fourth Gospel not only is there no parable properly so called, but aphorisms are much more rarely met with, and the teaching of Jesus takes a shape adapted to enlightened and spiritually-minded disciples rather than an unenlightened multitude. Nor is the difference in substance less marked. In the earlier Gospels the instructions and sayings of Jesus have mainly reference to the more outward aspects of His kingdom, to His own fulfilling of the law, to the moral reformation He was to effect, to the practical righteousness required of His disciples. In the other they have reference to the profound, the mystical relations existing between the Father and Himself, between Himself and His people, and among the various members of His flock.

Again, however, it is to be noticed that the very same interchange of allusions which we have already found existing in our two classes of authorities with regard to the outward framework of the history and the nature of Christ's Person, exists also in their accounts of His discourses. Passages may be quoted from John partaking at least largely of the aphoristic character of the teaching generally found in the first three Evangelists. Thus chap. 4: 44 may be compared with Mark 6: 4; chap. 12: 8 with Mark 14: 7; chap. 12: 25 with Matt. 10: 39; 16: 25; chap. 13: 16 with Matt. 10: 24; Luke 6: 40; chap. 13: 20 with Matt. 10: 40; chap. 15: 20 with Matt. 10: 25; chap. 15: 21 with Matt. 10: 22; chap. 18: 11 with Matt. 16: 52; chap. 20: 23 with Matt. 16: 19. Although, too, there are no parables in the Fourth Gospel, many of its figures so much resemble parables, could be so easily drawn out into parables, that they have been appropriately described as 'parables transformed.'* Such are the passages relating to the blowing of the wind, the fields white unto the harvest, the corn of wheat which must die in the ground before it springs up, the sorrow and subsequent joy of the woman in travail, the good shepherd, the true vine (chap. 3: 8; 4: 35; 12: 24; 10: 1–16; 15: 1–8). Nor can we forget that, in the Fourth Gospel, it is for the most part a different audience to which Jesus speaks. He addresses not so much the mass of the people as the 'Jews;' and as those so designated undoubtedly comprised a large number of the most highly educated of the day, we may expect that they will be spoken to in a tone different from that adopted towards others. The words of chap. 6: 41 (see the Commentary) are in this respect peculiarly important; for it appears from them that the 'hard sayings' found in the remaining portion of the discourse given in that chapter were intended, not for the 'multitude,' but for the ruling class. The words of ver. 59 might at first sight lead to a different impression.

On the other hand, there are clear indications in the earlier Gospels that Jesus did not always speak in that sententious and parabolic style which they mainly represent him as employing. In this respect the words of Matt. xi. 25–27 cannot be too frequently referred to, for the argument founded upon them is perfectly incontrovertible. They show that a style of teaching precisely similar to that which meets us in the Fourth Gospel was known to the first. Keim, indeed, has attempted to weaken the force of the argument by the allegation that the words are not found in 'the ordinary every-day intercourse' of Jesus, but at an 'isolated and exalted moment of his life.'* Such moments, however, are precisely those which John has undertaken to record; or, if this ought not to be said, it is Jesus in the frame of mind peculiar to such moments that he especially presents to us. If, therefore, the words given by Matthew are appropriate to the time when they were spoken, the words given by John, though on many different occasions of a like kind, are not less so. Nor is this the only passage of the earlier Gospels that may be quoted as possessing the isolated and exalted character referred to. The words at the institution of the Last Supper are not less marked: 'Take, eat, this is my body. . . . Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom' (Matt. 26: 26–29). Such words exhibit the very same lofty mystical spirit that meets us in the Gospel of John. They are as much out of keeping with the practical sententious character of the teaching of Jesus in the other parts of these Gospels (if indeed such an expression is to be used at all) as anything contained in the Gospel with which we are now dealing. A similar remark may be made with regard to the eschatological discourses of Jesus in the earlier Gospels (comp. Matt. 24 :), and to His answer to the high priest (Matt. 26: 64), the difference between them and the Sermon on the Mount being quite as great as that between His general teaching in the Fourth Gospel and in the Gospels which preceded it.

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* Westcott, *Intr. to Study of the Gospels*, p. 268.

It is in this thought, indeed, as it seems to us, that the explanation of the point now before us is to be found. The utterances of Jesus in John belong to the tragic aspect of His work. No one will deny that, taking the facts even of the first three Gospels alone, the life of the Redeemer upon earth was marked by all the elements of the most powerful and pathetic tragedy. His perpetual struggle with evil, His love and self-sacrifice, met with opposition and contempt; His bearing the sorrows and the sins of men, His unshaken confidence in God, His sufferings and death, the constant presence of His Father with Him, and the glorious vindication given Him at last in the Resurrection and Ascension, supply particulars possessed of a power to move us such as no other life has known. In this point of view John looks at them. His Gospel is not the record of ordinary life. It is the record of a life which passes through all the most solemn and touching experiences of man, and which makes its appeal to the most powerful emotions of the heart. This is very strikingly exhibited in the light in which Jesus is set before us at the first moment when He passes beyond the circle of His disciples to the larger field of the world (2: 12, see Commentary); and it is not less apparent in the pathos that so often marks the language of the writer (1: 11, 12: 37). Hence the almost exclusive presentation of tragic scenes, of 'exalted moments,' and the preservation of discourses suitable to them.

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* Keim, Engl. transl., i. p. 176.

The remarks now made, though applying mainly to the form, may be applied also to the substance of the discourses of the Fourth Gospel. It must be felt, too, that the profound instructions of Jesus contained in it are not out of keeping with the personality or character of the Speaker. Was He truly the Son of God? Did He come to meet every necessity of our nature? not only to enforce that practical morality to which conscience bears witness, but to reveal those deeper truths on the relation of man to God, and in Him to his brother man, for which a revelation was especially needed; then there is nothing strange in the fact that He should have spoken so much of matters lying far beyond mortal ken. Rather, surely, should we expect that, with His own heart filled with the deep things of God, He would speak out of its abundance; that, dwelling Himself amidst the great realities of the unseen and spiritual world, He would many a time lead into them the disciples whom He loved, and whom He would guide into all the truth.

Or, if it be said that these profound teachings were spoken not to friends, but to determined enemies, the principle of reply is the same. Here also there is the same elevation above the level of common life. These 'Jews,' so constantly addressed, are not the nation, but those in whom the outward, carnal, selfish spirit of a degenerate Judaism was concentrated (see Commentary). As to the existence of this class there can be no doubt. The title, indeed, is peculiar to John, but the class itself meets us in the earlier Evangelists. If, then, it existed, we may well ask whether it is not represented in the Fourth Gospel as addressed in the very manner in which such an audience must be spoken to. Let us suppose any Church of our own day become as carnal as the Jewish Church in the days of Christ. What other course could a reformer pursue, what other language could he use, but the course and the language of Jesus here? A worldly *church* cannot be spoken to like the world; self-chosen darkness cannot be treated like the darkness of a naturally unfortunate condition.

What has been said goes far to explain the peculiar character of the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. But there are other questions in connection with them to which it is necessary to allude. Are they purely objective? Are they a record of the exact words used in the circumstances referred to? Are they free from any trace of the mind through which they passed in their transmission to us? It has been urged that these questions must be answered in the negative, partly because such long and profound discourses could not have been remembered at a distance of fifty years from the time when they were spoken, partly because their resemblance to the First Epistle of John is a proof that in these discourses it is John who speaks rather than his Master. Neither consideration has much weight. It cannot be imagined that only at the end of fifty years would the Evangelist endeavor to remember them. Rather throughout all that time must they have been the theme of his constant and loving meditation; day after day and night after night he must have brought up before him the sight of that much-loved form and the sound of that well-remembered voice; and every word of his Master, even many a word which he has not recorded, must have been ever flowing gently through his heart. John too had the promise of the Spirit to 'bring to his remembrance all things that Jesus said to him' (14: 26); and, to whatever extent we admit his own human agency in the composition of his Gospel, we cannot forget that the fulfilment of this promise must have secured him from the errors of ordinary writers, and enabled him, as they could not have done, to present to his readers the perfect truth.

Nor, further, is the supposition with which we are now dealing needed to explain the fact that the tone of much of our Lord's teaching in this Gospel bears a striking resemblance to that of the First Epistle of John. Why should not the Gospel explain the Epistle rather than the Epistle the Gospel? Why should not John have been formed upon the model of Jesus rather than the Jesus of this Gospel be the reflected image of himself? Surely it may be left to all candid minds to say whether, to adopt only the lowest supposition, the creative intellect of Jesus was not far more likely to mould His disciple to a conformity with itself, than the receptive spirit of the disciple to give birth by its own efforts to that conception of a Redeemer which so infinitely surpasses the loftiest image of man's own creation.

While, however, this may be said, it may at the same time be allowed that up to a certain point the form in which the discourses are presented, sometimes even their very language, has been affected by the individuality of the writer. Lengthy as they not infrequently are, they are obviously compressed statements of what must have occupied a still longer time in delivery, with much of the questioning and answering that must have occurred in a protracted controversy suppressed. Occasionally the very language of the original (as in the use of an imperfect tense) indicates this; while the reference at the feast of Tabernacles (7 : 23) to the healing of the impotent man (chap. 5), which must have taken place at least months before, is a proof that that miracle done on the Sabbath had been kept fresh in the minds of those addressed by many incidents and words not mentioned. Links may often be thus awanting which it is difficult for us to supply, and compression could hardly fail to give additional sharpness to what is said. Besides this, the tragic spirit of the Gospel, of which we have already spoken, may be expected to exercise an influence over the manner in which discourses are presented in it. Keeping these considerations in view, we shall look, in the scenes of the Fourth Gospel, for such details as may best embody the essential characteristics of any narrative which the Evangelist is desirous to present to us, rather than for all the particulars with which he was acquainted. We shall understand, too, the artificial structure, the double pictures and parallelisms which meet us in the longer discourses, such as those of chaps. 5, 10, 14, 15, 16, (see the Commentary).

The sayings and discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are not, therefore, to be regarded as in every respect simple reproductions of the precise words spoken by Him. The true conclusion seems to be that we have here a procedure on the part of the Evangelist precisely parallel to that which marks his method of dealing with the historical incidents of the life of Jesus. These are selected, grouped, presented under the dominating power of the idea which he knows that they express. So also with the words of Christ. They also are selected, grouped, presented under the power of the fundamental idea which prevails throughout them.

By frankly admitting this much is gained. On the one hand, historical accuracy, in its deepest and truest sense, is not impaired; the *result* produced in the mind of the reader is exactly that which was produced by our Lord Himself upon those who witnessed His actions or heard His words. On the other hand, the facts of the case receive a natural explanation. Above all, the whole procedure on the part of John is in harmony with the principles of Him who would have us always rise through His words to that divine ideal which they reveal.

One other remark ought to be made before we close. In so far as the difference between John and the Synoptists affords ground for an argument, its bearing is favorable, not unfavorable, to the authenticity of our Gospel. Let us assume for a moment the earliest date assigned to it by the opponents of its apostolical authority, and what is the phenomenon presented to us? That about A. D. 110 a writer, obviously setting before himself the purpose of giving a delineation of the life of Jesus and of impressing it on the Church, departed entirely from the traditional records that had now taken a settled form; that he transferred the Messiah's labors to scenes previously unheard of; gave to His ministry a duration previously unknown; represented both His person and His work in a light wholly new; and then expected the Church, which had by this time spread abroad into all regions, through three generations of men, to accept his account as correct. In the very statement of the case its incredibility appears. Only on the supposition that the writer of the Fourth Gospel felt that the Church for which he wrote would recognize essential harmony, not contradiction, between his representation and that of his predecessors, that men would see in it that enlarging of the picture of a loved personality which faithful memories supply, can we explain his having written as he has done.

## VI. THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS COMMENTARY.

We have spoken, as far as our limited space will allow, of some of those points connected with the Gospel of John which seem likely to be of most interest to the readers of a Commentary like the present, or which may prepare them to understand better the following exposition. It remains only that we indicate in a sentence or two the principles upon which that exposition is founded.

Our main, it may almost be said our single, effort has been to ascertain the meaning of the words before us, and to trace the thought alike of the writer himself and of the great Master whom he sets forth. In doing this we have endeavored to bestow more than ordinary care upon every turn of expression in the original, upon every change of construction, however slight, effected by prepositions, tenses, cases, or even order of words. Many such changes have no doubt escaped our notice, and some have been left without remark because we felt unable to supply a satisfactory explanation of them. Even as it is, however, it is probable that not a few will think that we have been too minute; and that, in spending time upon what they will regard as trifling particulars, we have paid too little attention to those larger statements of truth which might have been better adapted to the readers for whom we write. From such an opinion we venture entirely to dissent. No trustworthy statements of general truth can be at any time gained without the most complete induction of particulars; and if this be true of any book of Scripture, it is even peculiarly true of the Fourth Gospel. The care bestowed upon it by its writer is one of its most remarkable characteristics. Whatever be the sublimity to which it rises, however impassioned its language, or however deep the flow of its emotion, every phrase or word or construction contained in it is fitted into its place as if the calmest and most deliberate purpose had presided over the selection. It is the skill of the loftiest feeling, though unconsciously exercised, that has made the Gospel what it is. The truth contained in it has woven for itself a garb corresponding in the most minute particulars to its nature, and every change in the direction even of one of its threads is a testimony to some change in the aspects of the truth by whose living energy the whole was fashioned. If, therefore, we have erred in connection with this point, we have erred not by excess but by defect. A rich harvest still awaits those who will be more faithful to the principle or more successful in carrying it out than we have been.

It seems unnecessary to add much more as to the principles by which we have been guided in our work. Innumerable references might easily have been made to the extensive literature connected with this Gospel, and to the opinions of those who have commented upon it before us. We have thought it best, except in one or two instances, to refrain from giving them. In addition to the Commentaries of Luthardt, Godet, Lange, Meyer, and others, which it would have been presumption to neglect, we have endeavored to use all other helps within our reach. Unfortunately, the noble Commentary of Dr. Westcott did not appear until almost the last of the following pages had been printed off. It was thus impossible to take advantage of it; but to the personal communications of that eminent scholar, and to the discussions which have taken place in the New Testament Revision Company, in regard alike to the Fourth Gospel and the other books of the New Testament, we probably owe more than we are ourselves aware of. At the same time, we are not conscious of having yielded in any instance to authority however great. Under a deep sense at once of the difficulty and responsibility of our task, we have submitted every question to independent investigation; and the results, very often different from those of our predecessors, must be left to speak for themselves.

It would be too much to expect that our readers will find every difficulty discussed which meets them in their own study of this Gospel. One of the most marked peculiarities of such a book is that, in the fulness of its life and meaning, it strikes every attentive student in a different light, and suggests to each thoughts and problems which do not occur to others. All that we can say is, that in no single instance have we consciously passed by a difficulty that we ourselves felt; and we may perhaps venture to hope that the principles upon which these have been treated may be applicable to others of which we had not thought.

The principles upon which the Text of the Gospel has been determined were explained by one of the authors of this Commentary in the second part of a small work on 'The Words of the New Testament,' published some years ago, and now out of print. In the translation of the text, we have aimed at correctness rather than ease of continuous expression: and if we have almost always given a full translation at the head of the notes, the reason is easily explained. It seemed desirable, where not only every word, but even the order of all the words is important, that the reader should have the complete sentence directly under his eye.

In conclusion, we may be permitted to say that both the authors of the following Commentary hold themselves responsible for the whole. No part of it is the work of either by himself; and they have wrought together with a harmony which, through all the three or four years it has occupied them has been to both a source of constant thankfulness and joy. But they desire to forget themselves, and they ask their readers to forget them, in the one common aim to discover the true meaning of a Gospel which the eloquent Herder long ago described as 'the heart of Jesus.'

*July*, 1880.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
# JOHN.

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## CHAPTER 1: 1–18.

### *The Prologue.*

1 : 1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word

### *The Prologue*, vers. 1–18.

CONTENTS.—The Prologue of the Gospel of John stands in the most intimate connection with the plan and purpose of the Gospel as a whole. It is not to be regarded as a philosophical speculation to which the historical life of the Redeemer shall be afterwards conformed. It contains rather a short summary of that life in the light in which the Evangelist had been divinely taught to regard it, and of the impressions which he had gathered from it as the manifestation, the revelation, of God Himself to men. It is to illustrate and unfold this conception, which is at once metaphysical, theological, and historical, that the fourth Evangelist writes. Hence he begins with a description of what Jesus was in Himself, in the profoundest depths of His being; passing from that to what He 'became' in order that in Him men might so behold the glory of the Father as to be transfigured into the same glory, reaching onward to the fulfilment of their own destiny, to be children of God.

The Prologue is usually divided into three parts, ending with ver. 5, ver. 13, ver. 18, respectively. Of these divisions, the first brings before us the thought of the Eternal Word,—in Himself (ver. 1), and as the source of created being, of life, of light (vers. 2–5). The subject of the next thirteen verses is the Word as revealed to men, first generally (vers. 6–13), and secondly by the Incarnation (vers. 14–18). These two sections (in accordance with an important principle of structure, characterizing both this Gospel and the Apocalypse), though apparently successive, are really parallel: the thought is thus presented under two aspects, the second fuller and more definite than the first. In the former section we read of the Baptist, sent to bear witness concerning the manifestation of the Word as the Light (vers. 6–8); then of the twofold results of this manifestation, but especially of the blessedness of those who received the Word (vers. 9–13). The next section records the Incarnation of the Word (ver. 14); the testimony borne by the Baptist to the glory of the Incarnate Word (ver. 15); and, as before (but with greater clearness and definiteness, and from the point of view of human experience), the results of this crowning manifestation of the Word. This analysis, whilst showing the general parallelism of the thoughts in the several divisions of the Prologue, shows also that the division as hitherto indicated is insufficient Ver. 14 clearly commences a new section, and yet ver. 15 (relating to the Baptist) immediately recalls the commencement of the former section (ver 6). If, however, ver. 14 be carefully examined, it will be seen that it stands in a definite relation to the first section, the opening words ('And the Word became flesh') being antithetical to ver. 1, and the remainder of the verse (which sets forth generally the manifestation of the Incarnate Word) corresponding to vers. 2–5. Hence the structure of the Prologue as a whole may be presented in the following tabular form:—

*Section* I. THE WORD.
- (*a*) In Himself (ver. 1).
- (*b*) In His general manifestations (vers. 2–5).

*Section* II. THE WORD APPEARING IN THE WORLD.
- (*a*) The Baptist's general witness concerning the Word, as the Light (vers. 6–8).
- (*b*) The general results of the manifestation of the Word (vers. 9–13).

*Section* III. THE WORD FULLY REVEALED IN THE INCARNATION.
- *A.* (1) The Incarnate Word Himself (ver. 14 *a:* parallel to ver. 1).
  - (2) The Incarnate Word in His general manifestation of Himself (ver. 14 *b:* parallel to vers. 2–5).
- *B.* The Baptist's witness, now definite and personal (ver. 15: parallel to vers. 6–8).
- *C.* The complete results of this manifestation of the Word in the case of all who receive Him (vers. 16–18: parallel to vers. 9–13).

Ver. 1. **In the beginning was the Word.** This sublime opening of the Gospel carries our thoughts at once to the no less sublime opening of the Book of Genesis, whose first words the Evangelist certainly had present to his mind. He too will tell of a creation, and a creation has a 'beginning.' The words 'in the beginning,' taken by themselves, do not express the idea of eternal pre-existence; but they leave room for it, and in this respect they stand contrasted with the phrase 'from the beginning,' which often meets us in the writings of John (8: 44; 1 John 1: 1, 2: 7, 24, 3: 8). They denote simply the point of time; and the difference of thought with which they are connected, as compared with Gen. 1: 1, is to be found not in the meaning of 'beginning,' but in the different *direction* which the writer takes, and in the verb which he employs. In Gen. 1: 1, the sacred historian starts from the beginning and comes downwards, thus keeping us in the course of time. John starts from the same point, but goes upwards, thus taking us into the eternity preceding time. In Gen. 1: 1, we are told that God 'in the beginning *created*,'—an act done in time. Here we are told that 'in the beginning the Word *was*,' a verb strongly antithetical to 'came into being' (vers. 3, 14, comp. 8: 58), and implying an absolute existence preceding the point referred to. As that which is absolute, self-existent, not created—that which *is*—is eternal, so the predication of eternity is involved in the clause before us taken as a whole. He who thus 'was in the beginning,' who, as we afterwards read, 'was with God,' and 'was God,' here bears the name of 'the Word' [Logos, which means both *reason* and *word*]. In one other verse of the Prologue this name is repeated (ver. 14); but it does not occur again in the Gospel. Nor shall we find the term (used, as here, simply and without qualification) in any other passage of the New Testament. The nearest approach is found in Rev. 19: 13, where the name of the righteous Conqueror and King is given as 'The Word of God.' Two or more other passages may be said rather to recall to our thought the name we are considering than to present examples of its use; see especially 1 John 1 : 1 ('the word of life,' followed by 'the life was manifested,' ver. 2), and Heb. 4: 12. Though, however, this term is not really adopted by any New Testament writer except John, it is not peculiar to him in any other sense. When he wrote, it was a familiar and current term of theology. It has sometimes, indeed, been maintained that John's usage must be taken by itself, since with very much of the theological speculation in which this term so freely occurs he can have had no sympathy. We shall see that John's usage certainly does in an important sense stand alone; but as it is absolutely impossible that he, living at Ephesus (to say nothing of his long residence in Palestine), should have been unacquainted with the current doctrines respecting the Logos, it is inconceivable that he can have taken up the term without reference to these doctrines. Hence it is with the history of the term that we first have to do. Every careful reader of the Old Testament is struck by the prominence given in certain passages to 'the word of the Lord,' language which almost implies personal action being sometimes connected with this 'word.' See, for example, Ps. 33: 6, 105: 19, 107: 20; 1 Sam. 3: 21. The root of this usage (at all events in very many instances) is to be found in the first chapter of Genesis, where the successive acts of creation are associated with divine words (see Ps. 33: 6). Such passages as these, with their partial personification of the word of God, seem to have powerfully impressed early Jewish teaching. There was much besides in the Old Testament to strengthen this impression,—as the frequent references in the Pentateuch to the Angel of Jehovah, and the language used of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs (chapter 8; compare also chapters 1, 3, 9, and Job 28). Thus a minute study of Scripture language was the means of leading Jewish teachers to connect divine acts with some personified attribute of God rather than with God Himself, or to seek for some medium of communication between God and man where the Scriptures themselves had spoken of direct revelation or fellowship. What other influence aided this tendency of thought, we cannot here inquire. The results are patent, especially in the Targums or Chaldee paraphrases of Scripture. The dates of the several Targums which are extant have been a matter of controversy: for our purpose, however, this is not of consequence, as it is acknowledged on all hands that every one of these paraphrases contains early materials. We cannot within our limits quote at length; but a reference to the following passages in Etheridge's translation of the Targums on the Pentateuch will show how far the writers went in substituting 'the Word' (*Memra*) for the name of God Himself. In the Targum of Onkelos, see Gen. 3: 8, 28: 20; Num. 23: 4, 21; Deut. 9: 3: in that of Pseudo-Jonathan, Gen. 3: 8; Num. 23: 4, 21: in the Jerusalem Targum, besides the three last mentioned, Gen. 18: 1; 16: 13;

19: 24. From the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel may be quoted Isa. 63: 7; Mal. 3: 1. An examination of these passages will show how familiar to Jews had become the conception of the Word of God, through whom God made Himself known to men. Very little light is thrown upon the subject by the several Apocryphal books, and hence it will not be necessary to refer to them here. It is otherwise with the writings of the great Alexandrian philosopher Philo. In these the doctrine of the Divine Word holds a prominence which it would be hard to exaggerate. Yet from the multitude of passages in which Philo speaks of the attributes and actions of the Word, it is impossible to deduce with any certainty a clear statement of doctrine. Now the Word seems distinctly personal, now an attribute of God personified. In some passages the idea can be traced back to the thought of 'spoken word;' in many others Philo takes up the other meaning of the Greek word Logos, viz. *reason*. Hence, though Philo speaks of the universe as created through the Logos, yet in other passages the Logos is the design or the idea of creation in the mind of God. It is not necessary to carry this inquiry farther, since our only object is to collect the chief elements of thought associated with this term when John wrote. As has been said, he could not be ignorant of these various forms of teaching; if not ignorant, he could not be indifferent on the one hand to the good, or on the other to the evil, which they contained. He recognized the various teachings as a providential preparation for the true theology. In these introductory verses he adopts the term, but so defines it as to fix its meaning for all Christians. There is One by whom the Eternal and Invisible God reveals Himself: the Revealer is a Person: the Revealer is Himself God. Not only in outward manifestation, but also in inward fellowship with the heart, God reveals Himself by the Word of God, who is God. In one instance John appears to take up and ratify the wider application of the term which we have noticed above. This first verse takes us beyond the region of revelation to man: when 'in the beginning,' beyond the limits of time, 'the Logos was,' the thought of 'speech' ceases to give us any help towards grasping the meaning; and, if we may venture to interpret the term at all in this application, we can only think of the human analogy by which we pass from the *uttered word* to the *thought* or *reason* of the speaker. To all that John teaches respecting the Logos, the Lord's own teaching directly led. The doctrine of these verses is identical with that of chaps. 5: 19, 6: 57, 10: 30, 17: 5, etc. The personal application of the term is not found in our Lord's discourses; but many of those recorded in this Gospel contain remarkable examples of that exalted use of 'the word' of God to which, as we have seen, the history of this sublime name may ultimately be traced. — **And the Word was with God**: the second of the three statements made in this verse regarding the Word, and obviously higher than the first. It is impossible to convey in English the full force of the preposition 'with' in the Greek, for it denotes not merely being beside, but maintaining

2 was with God, and the Word was God. The same
3 was in the beginning with God. All things were
made [1]by* him; and without him [2]was not anything
4 made that hath been made. In him was life; and

[1] Or, *through*. * Substitute the marginal rendering for the text.—*Am. Com.*

[2] Or, *was not anything made. That which hath been made was life in him; and the life, &c.*

communion and intercourse with (comp. Mark 6: 3; 1 John 1: 2; 2: 1).—**And the Word was God**: the third and highest statement respecting the Word. The Word is possessed of divine essence; in that being in which He 'was,' He so possesses the divine attributes that He is God. There is difference of personality, but unity of nature. In this last clause the climax of the three clauses is complete.

Ver. 2. **The same was in the beginning with God.** 'The same'—He who has just been spoken of as God—was in the beginning 'with God:' *i. e.*, 'He of whom I have spoken as God, was in the beginning in active, eternal communion with God,—not simply the Word with God, but God with God.' The elements of the thought have been given in ver. 1, but in their combination they acquire new force. The special object of these words seems to be to prepare for the next verse; it is only when we have been taught concerning 'God with God' that we are prepared to hear of the creation of all things '*through*' the Divine Word. He with whom the Divine Word 'was in the beginning' created all through Him.

Ver. 3. **All things came into being through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into being.** Such a combination of two clauses, the first positive, the second negative (see note on ver. 20), is characteristic of John's style. The two together assert the truth contained in them with a universality and force not otherwise attainable. This truth is, that 'all things'—not all as a whole, but all things in the individuality which precedes their combination into a whole—came into being through this Word who is God. The preposition 'through' is that by which the relation of the Second Person of the Trinity to creation is usually expressed (1 Cor. 8: 6; Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1: 2); as, indeed, this is the conception which belongs to the doctrine of the Logos, the Divine Word. Occasionally, however, the same language is used of the Father: see Heb. 2: 10, and comp. Rom. 11: 36.

Vers. 3, 4. **That which hath come into being was life in him.** We are led by various considerations to take this view of the passage rather than that which is presented in the Authorized Version. The Greek admits of either punctuation (and rendering), but the absence of the article before the word 'life' suggests that it is here a predicate, not the subject of the sentence. By almost all (if not all) the Greek Fathers of the first three centuries the words were thus understood; and we may reasonably, in such a case as this, attach great importance to the conclusions attained by that linguistic tact which is often most sure where it is least able to assign distinct reasons for its verdict. Further, this division of the words corresponds best with the rhythmical mode in which the earlier sentences of the Prologue are connected with one another. It is characteristic of them to make the voice dwell mainly, in each line of the rhythm, upon a word taken from the preceding line; and this characteristic is not preserved in the case before us unless we adhere to the ancient construction. We have seen what the Word is in Himself; we are now to see Him in His relation to His creatures. Created being was 'life in Him.' He was life, life absolutely, and therefore the life that can communicate itself,—the infinitely productive life, from whom alone came to every creature, as He called it into being, the measure of life that it possesses. In Him was the fountain of all life; and every form of life, known or unknown, was only a drop of water from the stream which, gathered up in Him before, flowed forth at His creative word to people the universe of being with the endlessly multiplied and diversified existences that play their part in it. It is not of the life of man only that John speaks, still less is it only of that spiritual and eternal life which constitutes man's true being. If the word 'life' is often used in this more limited sense in the Gospel, it is because other kinds and developments of life pass out of view in the presence of that life on which the writer especially loves to dwell. The word itself has no such limitation of meaning, and when used, as here, without anything to suggest limitation, it must be taken in its most comprehensive sense. It was in the Word, then, that all things that have life lived; the very physical world, if we can say of its movements that they are life, the vegetable world, the world of the lower animals, the world of men and angels, up to the highest angel that is before the throne. Ere yet they came into being, their life was in the Word who, as God, was life, and from the Word they received it when their actual being began. The lesson is the same as that of Col. 1: 16, 17, 'In Him were all things created,' and 'in Him all things subsist;' or, still more, of Rev. 4: 11, 'Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy pleasure they *were*' (not 'are,' as in the Authorized Version), 'and they were created.'—**And the life was the light of men.** From the wide thought of all created existences, the Evangelist passes in these words to the last and greatest of the works of God, man, whose creation is recorded in the first chapter of Genesis. All creatures had 'life' in the Word; but this life was to man something more than it could be to others, because he had been created after a fashion, and placed in a sphere, peculiar to himself amidst the different orders of animated being. God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (Gen. 1: 26). Man was thus capable of receiving God, and of knowing that he had received Him; he had a sphere and a capacity belonging to none of the lower creatures spoken of in the great record of creation; his nature was fitted to be the conscious abode, not of the human only, but of the divine. Hence the Word could be in him as in no other creature.

5 the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness [1] apprehended it

[1] Or, *overcame.* See ch 12: 35 (Gr.).

But the Word is God (ver. 1), and 'God is light' (1 John 1 : 5). Thus the Word is 'light' (comp. ver. 7); and as man was essentially fitted to receive the Word, that Word giving life to all found in him a fitness for the highest and fullest life,—for 'light,' therefore, in its highest and fullest sense: and 'the life was the light of men.' The idea of human nature thus set forth in these words is peculiarly remarkable, and worthy of our observation, not only as a complete answer to those who bring the charge of Manichæan dualism against the Fourth Gospel, but also to enable us to comprehend its teaching as to human responsibility in the presence of Jesus. 'The life,' it is said, 'was the light *of men;*' not of a class, not of some, but of all the members of the human family as such. Man's true nature, it is said, is divine: divine in this respect also, as distinguished from the divine in all creation, that man is capable of recognizing, acknowledging, *seeing* the divine in himself. The 'life' becomes 'light' in him, and it does not become so in lower creatures. Man's true life is the life of the Word; it was so originally, and he knew it to be so. If, therefore, he listens to the tempter and yields to sin (whose existence is admitted simply as a fact, no attempt being made to account for it), man corrupts his true nature, and is responsible for doing so. But his fall cannot destroy his nature, which still testifies to what his first condition was, to what his normal condition is, to what he ought to be. Man, therefore, only fulfills his original nature by again receiving that Word who is to offer Himself to him as the 'Word become flesh.' But if man's receiving of the Word be thus the fulfilling of his nature, it is his duty to receive Him; and this duty is impressed upon him by his *nature,* not by mere external authority. Hence the constant appeal of Jesus in this Gospel, not to external evidence only, but to that remaining life of the Word within us, which ought to receive the Word completely, and to hasten to the Light (comp. ver. 9).

Ver. 5. **And the light shineth in the darkness.** The darkness here spoken of is not an original darkness coexistent with created being (ver. 3). It belongs to the development of thought begun at ver. 4, and is coexistent only with the moral process of rejecting the Word, implied, though not expressly stated, in that verse. The Word through whom all come into being offers Himself at the same time to all as their light. Let them acknowledge and accept Him, they have life (chap. 8: 12); let them reject Him, they are in darkness for which they are responsible, because they have chosen it. It is a fact, however, that many always did, and still do, reject the light; and thus the darkness has been and is a positively existing thing. Yet the light has not forsaken the world. Not merely present point of time is indicated; in that case John could not have

6 not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name

immediately added the past tense, *overcame*. The idea is general. The Light, as it had existed, had shone; as it exists, it shines, always seeking to draw men into the full brightness of its beams.—**And the darkness overcame it not.** Such is the most probable meaning of these words, and so were they understood by the most ancient Christian writers. The verb which we have rendered 'overcame' occurs not unfrequently in the New Testament; but (when used, as here, in the active voice) it has not, and cannot have, the meaning *comprehend* (*i. e.* understand), which is given to it in the Authorized Version. The most important guide to the meaning is chap. 12: 35, where the same word is used, and where also the metaphor is similar: 'Walk . . . lest darkness overtake you,'—come over you, seize you. In the verse before us we read of light shining in the darkness; the darkness, ever antagonistic to the light, yet does not *overtake* or *come over* the light. The idea of *seizing*, in connection with this figure, is equivalent to overcoming or intercepting the light. Even if 'comprehend' were possible as a translation, it would be nothing to tell us that the darkness did not *comprehend* the light. That is implied in the fact that the darkness is *self-chosen* (comp. on ver. 4). But it is much to tell us that, in the conflict between the darkness and the light, the darkness failed to overcome (or eclipse) the light. The light, though sometimes apparently overcome, was really victorious; it withstood every assault, and shone on triumphantly in a darkened world. So far, therefore, from our finding here a 'wail' (as some have said), we have a note of exultation, a token of that victory which throughout the whole Gospel rises to our view through sorrow. We thus close what is obviously the first paragraph of the Gospel; and although it relates to the Pre-incarnate Word, and expresses the principles of His dealings in their most general form, the development of thought is precisely the same as that which the history of the Incarnate Word will be found to present. Through the Word all things have come into being. To all He offers Himself, that He may make them not only exist in Him, but, in the free appropriation of what He offers, *live* in Him. Some receive Him, and He becomes their light; others reject Him, and are immersed in the darkness which they choose. The darkness opposes and seeks to destroy the light, but the light shines on to victory.

Ver. 6. **There arose a man, sent from God, whose name was John.** With this verse we pass forward into the times of the Incarnate Word. The section upon which we first enter is, as compared with the second, general; hence the Incarnation is only implied, not expressly mentioned. The immediate preparation for this new period is the testimony of the Baptist; and the words with which he is introduced to us stand in striking contrast to what we have been told of the Word in ver. 1. He 'arose,'—literally, he 'came into being,' as distinguished from the 'was' of that verse. He was a man, 'sent

7 was John. The same came for witness, that he might
bear witness of the light, that all might believe through
8 him. He was not the light, but *came* that he might

from God,' as distinguished from the Word who was 'with God.' In adding, 'his name was John,' the Evangelist (we may perhaps say) does more than identify him as the great prophet who had so powerfully impressed all classes of the people. If we remember the deep significance attached to 'name' in this Gospel, it will seem possible that the antithesis to ver. 1 is still continued. The personal name needed for identification amongst men is placed in contrast with that name by which the eternal attributes of the Son are expressed, 'the Word' (comp. ver. 12). [It is significant that John the Evangelist calls the Baptist simply John, without the title given him by the Synoptical Evangelists to distinguish him from the son of Zebedee. One of the many indications of the Johannean orgin of the Gospel.—Ed.]

Ver. 7. **The same came for witness, that he might bear witness concerning the Light, that all might believe through him.** The impression produced by the Baptist had been great, but he had come to bear witness to One higher than himself. Here we meet for the first time with this word 'witness,' one of the characteristic words of the writings of John, occurring in various forms nearly fifty times in his Gospel, and thirty or forty times in his Epistles and the Apocalypse. The importance of the thought lies in its simplicity. The true witness declares what he has seen and heard (1 John 1: 2, 3); his testimony reflects 'the truth' so far as he has received it, just as the faithful mirror reflects the light that has come upon it. John came to bear such witness concerning the Light, that through him all might be led to 'believe'—trustfully to accept that Light, and yield themselves up to its influence. The introduction of the word 'all' is very remarkable. More clearly than any other passage this verse teaches us how great were the results which the Baptist's mission was intended to produce, immeasurably greater than those which were actually realized. Had Israel been faithfully and obediently waiting for the fulfilment of the divine promise, John's witness respecting Jesus would have turned 'all' Israel (and, through Israel, 'all' men) to the Saviour. In immediate effects the work of John, like that of One higher than John, would be pronounced by men a failure. In the light of this verse we can better understand such passages as Mal. 4; Matt. 11: 9–14; Luke 7: 29, 30.

Ver. 8 **He was not the Light, but he was that he might bear witness concerning the Light.** The thought of the greatness of the witness borne by John underlies the words of this verse. Great as the Baptist was, he was not the Light. What he *was* is not expressed, but only the purpose which he was to fulfil (comp. ver. 23). It is very possible that the words may have had a special

9 bear witness of the light. [1]There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth [2]every man, coming into

[1] Or, *The true light, which lighteth every man, was coming.*

[2] Or, *every man as he cometh.*

application to the opinions which (as we learn from Acts 18: 25, 19: 3) existed at Ephesus with regard to the mission of John.

Ver. 9. **There was the true Light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world.** This almost literal rendering of the Greek will show how it is that these simple words have been so variously explained. As in the English, so in the Greek, the word 'coming' might be joined either with 'light' or with 'man.' The punctuation we have adopted (it will be remembered that in ancient manuscripts of the original there is little or no punctuation) will show that, in our view, the last clause is to be joined, not with the second, but with the first clause of the verse. What has been said above of the general structure of the Prologue has shown that, as yet, the full presence of the Word personally come is not before us. The manifestation is in its initial stage, not yet complete. To this thought the word 'coming' exactly corresponds. But still more important in guiding to the right interpretation of the verse is the Evangelist's use of the last phrase elsewhere. The expression 'come into the world' occurs in as many as seven other passages of this Gospel (chap. 3: 19, 6: 14; 9: 39, 11: 27; 12: 46; 16: 28; 18: 37). In every one of these passages the words relate to the Lord Himself: sometimes they are used by the multitude (6: 14), or by a disciple (11: 27), as a designation of the Messiah, 'He that should come;' sometimes they are the words of Jesus or of the Evangelist, in passages which speak of the purpose of His 'coming.' In chaps. 3: 19 and 12: 46 the phrase stands in close connection with the figure which is now before us. The latter verse (chap. 12: 46) is especially noteworthy; for Jesus Himself says, 'I am come a light into the world.' If, then, we would allow the Evangelist to be his own interpreter, we seem bound to believe that he here speaks of the *light* as 'coming into the world.' If the words are joined with 'man,' they add little or nothing to the thought. 'Every man' is really as full and inclusive an expression as 'every man that cometh into the world.' Familiarity with the common rendering may prevent the reader from at once perceiving that this is true; but we are persuaded that reflection will show that by the change much is gained, nothing lost. In the previous verse we have read that John was not 'the Light.' When he 'arose' as a witness, the true Light was in existence; it had been shining in the darkness; it was now 'coming into the world,'—about to manifest itself with a clearness and in a manner hitherto unknown. Two more of the special terms of the Gospel meet us here, 'true' and 'world.' It is unfortunate that two different words must be represented by the same English word, 'true.' The one (used in chaps. 3: 33; 5: 31, 10 the world. He was in the world, and the world was

and eleven other verses of the Gospel) denotes truth in contrast with falsehood; the other, which we have before us here, expresses the real as contrasted with the phenomenal, that which is perfect and substantial as opposed to what is imperfect and shadowy, or that which is fully accomplished in contrast with the type which prefigured it. This word is, in the New Testament, almost confined to the writings of John. Of twenty-eight passages in which it occurs, nine are found in this Gospel, four in the First Epistle, ten in the Revelation. Three of the remaining five passages are (as might almost have been foreseen) in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The other examples of the word in this Gospel will be found in chaps. 4: 23. 37; 6: 32; 7: 28; 8: 16; 15: 1; 17: 3; 19: 35, and in most of these the reader will easily trace the idea. The 'true worshippers' are those whose worship is real, not imperfect and undeserving of the name; the bread which came down from heaven is 'the true bread,' that of which the manna was a type, that which ministers real and abiding nourishment. So here we read of the archetypal source of light, the light which alone is real and perfect.—This true Light was coming into the 'world.' Originally signifying the universe created and ordered by the hand of God, 'the world' came successively to mean the world of men, and the world of men as opposed to God. In this Gospel especially, we read of the world as an antagonistic power, unbelieving, evil in its works, hating and persecuting Jesus and His people,—a power over which He will be victorious, and which shall be convicted of sin and judged; but we also read of God's love to the world (chap. 3: 16), and of the gift of His Son that the world may be saved through Him. If the thought of evil and alienation is brought out in the following verse, it is most important to observe that this verse speaks of the illumination of *every man.* No man belongs to the world that is given up to darkness and impenitence, unless he, through resistance and choice of evil, have made the light that was in him to become darkness (comp. Eph. 4: 18).—We cannot doubt that in the words 'every man' there is an allusion to John ('a *man* sent from God') as himself illumined by this Light.

Ver. 10. **He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, and the world knew him not.** The subject is still the Light, which (ver. 9) was existent, and was 'coming into the world.' In the world, indeed, it was already (though the complete manifestation was yet to come), and—here the figure passes imperceptibly away, giving place to the thought of the Person—the world, though brought into being through Him, recognized not His presence. Note the simplicity of John's style, in which the three thoughts of the verse, though very various in their mutual relations, are, so to speak, placed side by side. These words relate both to the Pre-incarnate and to the Incarnate Word. The development is rather of thought than of time. Alike before His manifestation in the flesh

made [1]by* him, and the world knew him not. He
11 came unto [2]his own, and they that were his own
received him not. But as many as received him, to
12 them gave he the right to become children of God,

[1] Or, *through*. [2] Gr. *his own things*.
* Substitute the marginal rendering for the text.—*Am. Com.*

and after it, the Word was 'in the world.' The statement must not be limited to the manifestation of Christ in Israel. This verse is a repetition, in a more concrete form, of vers. 3–5 (in part).

Ver. 11. **He came unto his own home, and his own accepted him not.** Is this verse practically a repetition of ver. 10, in language more solemn and emphatic? Or do we here pass from the thought of the world in general to that of the Jewish people? The question is one of some difficulty. As ver. 12 is certainly quite general in its meaning, it may seem hazardous to introduce a limitation here. But the weight of argument seems on the whole to be on the other side. There is a manifest advance of thought as we pass from the last verse to this. Instead of 'He was in,' we find 'He came unto;' for 'the world,' we have 'His own home;' for 'knew' (perceived or recognized), we have 'accepted.' Every change seems to point to a more intimate relationship, a clearer manifestation, and a rejection that is still more without excuse. The Word, who was in the world (comp. Prov. 8: 31), had His home with the chosen people (Ex. 19: 5; Ps. 76: 2), to which had been given the revelation of the truth of God (Rom. 9: 4). It is still mainly of the Pre-incarnate Word that John speaks. In the whole history of Israel had been illustrated unfaithfulness to the truth (comp. Luke 11: 49, 50; Acts 7: 51–53); and the tender pathos of this verse recalls the words in which Jesus speaks of the rejection of Himself (Matt. 23: 37).

Ver. 12. **But as many as received him, to them gave he right to become children of God, even to them that believe in his name.** We have beheld the light shining in the darkness (vers. 10, 11); the thought of this verse is, that the darkness overcame it not! As we have already seen (see note on ver. 11), the language again becomes altogether general. Whosoever 'received Him,' to whatever period of time or nation they might belong, won the gift here spoken of. There is a perceptible difference between 'accepted' (ver. 11) and 'received,' as here used. Whilst the former lays emphasis on the will that consented (or refused) to receive, the latter brings before us the possession gained; so that the full meaning is, As many as by accepting Him received Him. The gift is not directly stated as 'sonship,' perhaps because the full manifestation of this blessing belongs to the latter days alone (comp on chaps 3: 5; 7: 39; Rom. 8: 15), whereas the Evangelist would here include the time of incomplete revelation which came before the Incarnation. Then, as now, men accepted or refused Him; but for those who accepted was reserved

13 *even* to them that believe on his name: which were [1]born, not of [2]blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor

[1] Or, *begotten.* [2] Gr. *bloods.*

'some better thing' (Heb. 11: 40) than had yet been clearly made known to man.—We must not fail to note (for in these wonderful verses everything is significant) that there is special fitness in the expression '*children*' rather than '*sons* of God;' for, whereas 'sonship' is often spoken of in connection with mere adoption, stress is here laid on an actual (though spiritual) paternity. The right or authority thus to become children of God is given by the Word 'to them that believe in His name.' It is very important to discriminate between the different phrases which John uses in relation to belief or faith. On the one hand we have the simple expression 'to believe Him' (as in chaps. 8: 31; 5: 38, etc.), usually denoting the acceptance of something said as true. On the other hand, we find very frequently in the New Testament, but especially in the writings of John, a remarkable combination of 'believe' with a preposition literally meaning 'into,' by which is denoted not merely an acceptance of words or professions, but such an acceptance of the Person trusted, such an approach of the heart towards Him, as leads to union with Him. This peculiarly Christian formula is by some rendered 'believe in,' by others 'believe on.' Both renderings are found in the Authorized Version. We have uniformly adopted the former, because it most clearly indicates the *union* towards which the faith tends.—There are a few passages (see ch. 2: 23; 3: 18; and John 5: 13) in which, as here, this phrase 'believe in' is followed by 'the name.' We have already seen with what fulness of meaning John uses the word 'name.' As in many passages of the Old Testament the 'name' expresses the sum of the qualities which mark the nature or character of a person (comp. Ex. 34: 5, 6). It is hard to fix the precise distinction between 'believing in Him' and 'believing in His name.' Perhaps we may say that, in the former case, the believer trustfully yields himself up to the Person, in the latter, to the revelation of the Person. Those who in chap. 2: 23 are spoken of as believing 'in the name' of Jesus, had not reached the personal union which believing in Jesus implies; but through their trustful acceptance of His revelation of Himself, the higher gift, the closer knowledge, might soon be gained. Here the 'name' cannot but recall ver. 1: the 'name' *Word* expressed the nature of the Person (comp. ver. 6).

Ver. 13. **Which were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.** The spiritual history of those who are spoken of in ver. 12 is here continued, and the nature of their sonship more fully defined. It is easy to see that in the three clauses there is a distinct progress of thought, the second (containing the thought of 'will') being more definite than the first, the third (in which 'man' is substituted for 'flesh,'—a person

14 of the will of man, but of God. And the word became flesh, and [1]dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of [2]the only begotten from the

[1] Gr. *tabernacled.* [2] Or, *an only begotten from a father.*

for human nature in general) being again more definite than the second. The three clauses, however, really express but one main idea; what that is must be learnt from the contrast in the closing words—'but (they were begotten) of God.' These believers have received the right to become 'children of God' by virtue of a true spiritual filiation, being begotten of God. The contrast to such a sonship is the very claim which is so strongly made by the Jews in chap. 8, and the validity of which our Lord altogether denies. The recollection of that chapter, which only brings into bold relief the habitual assumption of the Judaism of that day, will be sufficient to explain the remarkable emphasis of this verse, the threefold denial that men become children of God by virtue of any natural hereditary descent.—Although it is the claim of the Jews that is here in the writer's thought, yet, as often elsewhere, the Jews are the type of the world at large; by others besides Jews like presumptuous claims have been made, others have rested in the 'divinity' of their race. It is very possible that the peculiarity of the first clause (literally 'not of *bloods*') may be thus explained.

Ver. 14. **And the Word became flesh.** With this verse we enter upon the fuller and more concrete aspect of the Word appearing among men. As personally come in the flesh, however, the Word contrasts with what He was in His pre-existent state; and hence, before we have the Baptist introduced to us, we have statements exactly parallel to those of vers. 1–5. That now before us corresponds to ver. 1, for the Incarnate Word in Himself is here spoken of. He who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, 'became flesh;' did not merely take to Him a human body, did not merely become an individual man, but assumed *human nature* in its entireness (see chaps. 12: 27, 'soul;' 13: 21, 'spirit'), identified Himself with the race, entered into such a condition that He could have perfect communion and fellowship with us, and we with Him. The word 'became' does not denote that His divine nature was laid aside, and that His mode of being was simply human until, in the accomplishment of His work, He gradually transformed His human mode of being and regained for it all the glory of the divine. Were such a view correct, it would follow that when the divine was regained the human was laid aside, and that the humanity of the exalted Redeemer is not now as real as it was during His earthly course. No such thought is suggested by 'became;' for this word does not imply that the former state of being exists no longer. What is really indicated is the passing into a new state,—a transition rather than a transformation. The Word remains, with all His essential properties; there is added a new mode of being, the assumption of a new nature, denoted by 'flesh.' The most important parallels to this verse are 1 John, 4: 2, and 2 John, 7; these passages differ from the present in that the historical name 'Jesus Christ' is substituted for the Word, and that for the mysterious words 'became flesh' we read 'hath come' (or 'cometh') 'in flesh.'—**And he set his tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory (glory as of an only begotten from a father),—full of grace and truth.** As the first clause of this verse corresponded to verse 1, so these clauses correspond to vers. 2–5; only that, whereas there we had those properties of the Word in virtue of which He gives life and light in their most general form to all, here we have those in virtue of which, as the now completed revelation of the Father, He carries this life and light onward to perfection in such as truly receive Him. Still, however, it is the glory of the Word in Himself that is before us; if men are introduced in the words which follow as beholders of His glory, it is that our thought may rest, not on the blessing man thus receives (that is expressed below, vers. 16–18), but on the witness borne to the glory of the Incarnate Word. The figure of this verse is taken from the Old Testament (Lev. 26: 11; Ezek. 37: 27, etc.); the Tabernacle was the meeting-place of God and Israel, the house in which Jehovah dwelt in the midst of His people. With the image of a tent or tabernacle is often associated the thought of transitoriness; but that the word used here does not necessarily carry with it this thought is sufficiently proved by the language of the final promise, 'The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall set His tabernacle with them.' (Rev. 21 : 3). As the Shechinah dwelt in the Tabernacle, in the midst of the camp of Israel, so 'the Word become flesh' dwelt 'among us.' Some have taken the last words to mean 'in us,' and to contain a new reference to the assumption of human nature; but this view seems plainly inconsistent with the words which follow, 'we beheld His glory,' the meaning of which is fixed by the opening passage in the First Epistle (1 John 1 : 1–3). The glory was like that of an only son sent from a father; no image but this, it has been well said, 'can express the two-fold character of the glory, as at once derivative and on a level with its source.' In the only son are concentrated all the characteristics of the father; on him all the father's love is poured; to him belongs the whole inheritance; on him the father, when he sends him forth on an embassy, bestows all the plenitude of his power. The translation we have given is, we believe, that which the Greek words absolutely demand; it appears to us, moreover, to be the only rendering that gives meaning to the word of comparison 'as,' or preserves the progress of the Evangelist's thought. As yet there has been no word bringing in the thought of Divine Sonship. The attributes and working of the Divine Word have been continually before us; here the glory of the Word become flesh is compared with that of an only son sent from a father; but it is not until ver. 18 that these elements are combined into one supreme utterance of truth. The last words of the verse must be connected with the subject of the sentence: 'He (the

15 Father), full of grace and truth. John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, [1]This was he of

[1] Some ancient authorities read (*this was he that said*).

Word) set His tabernacle among us, full of grace and truth.' They go far towards explaining the 'glory' which the disciples 'beheld.' That the Word has been from the beginning of the world's history the bestower of 'grace and truth' is implied in the imagery of the earlier verses (vers. 4, 9); that which has been involved in the teaching respecting the pre-incarnate Word is clearly stated here of the Word become flesh. But this fulness of grace and truth does not exhaust the meaning of the 'glory.' In the glory of the Incarnate Word there are two elements, as His one Person unites two natures: in part the glory is unique (in kind and not only in degree), belonging to the God-man and not to the perfect Man; in part it is communicable to men, as Jesus Himself says, 'The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them.'

Ver. 15. **John beareth witness concerning him, and hath cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me has become before me, because he was before me.** We have seen that ver. 14 is parallel to vers. 1–5. In like manner this verse is parallel to vers. 6–8; but it is also an advance upon those verses containing the Baptist's witness to the Personal Word become flesh, not to the Word as the general Light of men.—'Beareth witness,' not 'bare witness' (ver. 32). It is as if the Evangelist would say, Of this John *is* the witness; his testimony abides, unchanging, always present. The same thought comes out more distinctly still in the verb which follows, 'hath cried.' (The usual translation 'crieth' seems on various grounds less probable.) The loud cry of the faithful witness has come down through all the years; we seem to hear its echoes still. The Baptist clearly refers to witness which he had borne after Jesus appeared; hence the words, 'This *was* he.' It is unusually difficult to find a rendering that will fully convey the meaning of this verse. As the word 'before' occurs in two members of the verse, the English reader inevitably considers the contrast to be between 'is preferred' (or 'is become') and 'he was.' In reality, 'before' here answers to two different words. A literal translation will show at once the meaning and the difficulty of finding an easy expression of the meaning: 'He that cometh behind me has become in front of me, because he was before me.' Jesus came 'after' or 'behind' John, as coming later in His manifestation to the world. As the later in time, it might have been expected that He would take rank after him who was His predecessor; but He has been advanced before John; the reason of this is given in John's declaration, 'He was before me.' That which these words directly affirm is priority of time; but, as in respect of human birth this could not be affirmed of Jesus, the words bring into view a pre-existence so transcendent as of itself to assert an infinite superiority to every other man. This anterior

whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before
16 me: for he was [1] before me. For of his fulness we all

[1] Gr. *first in regard of me.*

dignity explains why He that followed John has come to be before Him. The herald came first to prepare the way for the King; when the King arrives, the herald retires from view. The last words of the verse require further notice. They are not fully represented by 'before me,' as if they contained nothing beyond a comparison of Jesus with the Baptist. The former word is absolute, 'He was first;' the other word is added because a comparison is needed, 'first in regard of me.' We might almost paraphrase the very remarkable combination thus: First, and (by consequence) before me.

Ver. 16. **Because out of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace.** In order to understand this verse, and especially the very difficult word 'because,' with which the true reading of the verse begins, we must look at the structure of the whole passage. Along with vers. 17 and 18, this verse is parallel to vers. 9–13; and ver. 14, as we have seen, answers to vers. 1–5. The last verse in like manner stands related to vers. 6–8; and, as these verses are introduced between ver. 5 and ver. 9,—which might be read continuously, the subject remaining the same,—so is ver. 15 almost parenthetical, bringing in (as in the earlier verses) the witness of John before the statement of the results following the manifestation of the Word. The words 'we all received' and 'His fulness' are sufficient to show that the verse is a continuation of the thought of ver. 14, and belongs to the Evangelist, not to the Baptist. If, then, ver. 15 is parenthetical, the present verse is naturally introduced by the word 'because.' We have here an illustration of the extreme importance which John attaches to Christian *experience.* In ver. 9 we have had the *fact* of what the Word bestows. Here we have more. We have the *answer* of Christian experience to the fact. We have not merely the light lightening, but the light appropriated, its value appreciated, its power felt. Verse 14 had not *described* Christian experience. The word 'beheld' there used had only assumed it (see the comment), and had mentioned the witness which it gave. Now we have the description itself: hence the 'because.' We beheld the glory of the Word become flesh, and are able to speak of that glory, '*because* out of His fulness,' etc. The last stage of the Prologue is thus reached, because the highest point of thought is attained. No more can be said when the appropriation of the Word is complete. The fulness spoken of is that of grace and truth, which so reside in the Incarnate Word that nothing more can be added. It is an absolute, not a comparative fulness,—a proof again that no part of that fulness is to be won back in the progress of the Messianic work. That fulness resides in the 'Word become flesh,' as such. 'Out of' it 'we all'—believers who beheld His glory, among whom He set His tabernacle—received. The thing is past. We received Him (ver. 12). When we received Him, He com-

17 received, and grace for grace. For the law was given
[1]by * Moses; grace and truth came [1]by Jesus Christ.
18 No man hath seen God at any time; [2]the only begot-

[1] Or, *through*. [2] Many very ancient authorities read *God only begotten*.
* Substitute the marginal rendering for the text.—*Am. Com.*

municated Himself to us. His fulness, so far as we could receive it, was made ours. Hence it is not said *what* we received; because it was not a gift bestowed by His fulness, but the measure of that fulness itself which we were capable of receiving. We are thus led also to the clear meaning of the last clause of the verse, 'and grace for grace.' Not exactly 'grace upon grace,' as if the meaning were successive measures of grace, one added to another; but grace given in fresh measure as each preceding measure has been improved, the 'fulness' constantly more and more made ours until we 'are fulfilled unto all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3: 19). It is Christian experience again.

Ver. 17. **Because the law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** It is very possible that this verse should be taken as directly parallel to ver. 11; hence the definite reference to the pre-Christian revelation here (see note on ver. 11). The thought of Christian experience again explains the connection of this verse with the preceding. The law is not undervalued. It was divine. It was a gift of God. It was a gift through the great Lawgiver of whom Israel was proud. But it was a fixed, unalterable thing, with definite boundaries, not stretching out into the illimitable and eternal. It could not express unbounded grace and truth, unbounded love, because in its very nature law has limits which it cannot pass. Now, however, there has 'come' (a far higher word than 'was given') a fulness of grace and truth, within which we stand, and which we are to appropriate more and more,—vast, illimitable, as is that God who is love. Hence, therefore, the *experience* of ver. 16 is possible. It will be noted that the two thoughts of this verse are placed side by side (see ver. 10), though in reality the first is subordinate to the second. And now comes in the great Name as yet unnamed, but named now in all the universality of its application, the Name which embraces historical Christianity in its whole extent as the religion both of Jew and Gentile, the religion of man,—the name which, in its one half ('Jesus,' Joshua, Jehoshua, 'Jehovah is Salvation,') expresses the purpose of all God's dealings with man, and in its other half ('Christ') the divine consecration of the Redeemer to His work. The verbs of this verse are used with great propriety,—'was given' of what was incidental in origin and temporary in duration; 'came' (literally 'became') of what, though revealed in time, was an eternal reality. One reflection alone remains, and then the Prologue may close.

Ver. 18. **No one hath seen God at any time; One who is only begotten God, he that is in the bosom of the Father,** ten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

**he declared him.** It is not possible in a commentary such as this to defend the reading which we here adopt, 'God' instead of 'Son.' But the passage is so extremely important that we may be permitted for once to depart from our usual practice of not referring to other writers, and to commend to our readers one of the finest critical Dissertations ever published in any language upon a reading of the New Testament. We refer to that by Dr. Hort of Cambridge upon this text (London, 1876). We add only that by thus reading we preserve an important characteristic of the structural principles of our Evangelist, that which leads him at the close of a section or a period to return to its beginning. The word 'God' here corresponds to 'God' in ver. 1. 'No one hath seen God at any time.' The contrast is to 'we beheld' in ver. 14, and the words describe God in his nature as God; He dwelleth in light that is inaccessible. The soul longs to see Him, but this cannot be. Is, then, its longing vain, its cry unheard? The Evangelist answers, No. One has 'declared' Him, has, as the Word, unfolded and explained Him. And the glorious fitness of the Word to do this is pointed out in three particulars, all showing how fitly He could do that which none other could do. (1) He is 'only begotten,' Son among all other sons in His own peculiar sense, who is fully able to represent the Father, to whom all the perfections of the Father flow. (2) He is God, not only Son, but, as Son, God,—Himself divine, not in a metaphorical sense, but possessing all the attributes of true and real divinity. (3) It is He who 'is in the bosom of the Father.' The climax of thought, and the consideration that here are mentioned the conditions which make it possible for Jesus to be the complete Interpreter of the Father, preclude our taking these words as referring to the state which succeeded the resurrection and ascension,—in the sense, 'He that hath returned to the bosom of the Father.' He of whom the Evangelist speaks is more than 'only begotten,' more than 'God.' He is 'in the bosom of the Father.' In Him God is revealed as a Father; without Him He can be revealed only as God. The words thus include more than 'with God' in ver. 1, more than the Divine self-communion, the communion of God with God. The fatherly element, the element of love, is here. Out of that element of love, or of grace and truth, the Son comes; into it He returns. It is of the very essence of His being so to do. He did so from eternity. He did so in time. He shall do it in the eternity to come. Not less does it belong to the profoundest depths of His nature to do so, than to be 'only begotten,' to be 'God.' Therefore is He fully qualified to declare the Father, whom to know as thus made known in Jesus Christ (ver. 17) is that 'eternal life' after which the heart of man feels, and in the possession of which alone is it completely blessed (comp. 17: 3; 20: 31). One remark has still to be made upon a point which may seem at first sight to interfere with the

## CHAPTER I. 19–34.

### *The Witness of the Baptist to Jesus.*

19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to

correctness of that view of the structure of the Prologue which (as we have seen) is not only a matter of interest, but also a guide in the interpretation. There is no mention of the *rejection* of the Word in vers. 14–18. But this fact when rightly considered rather confirms what has been said. It illustrates that *progress* which in this Gospel always accompanies parallelism. In vers. 1–5, the first section of the Prologue, we have seen that rejection is implied. In vers. 6–13, the second section, it is fully brought out. In vers. 14–18, the third section, it is overcome. Thus also, taking the Gospel as a whole, it is implied in the section immediately preceding the Conflict (chaps. 2: 12; 4: 54). It is fully brought out in the section of Conflict (chaps. 5: 1; 12: 50). It is overcome in the section following (chaps. 13: 1; 17: 26). How unique, how wonderful is the plan of the Gospel! How much light does the whole cast upon each part, how much each part upon the whole!

### *The Witness of the Baptist to Jesus.*—Vers. 19–34.

CONTENTS.—We enter here upon the second great division of the Gospel, extending from 1: 19 to 2: 11, and containing the presentation of Jesus, as He takes His place in the field of human history and, alike in the witness borne to Him by the Baptist and in His manifestation of Himself to His disciples, shows us what He is. When we know Him we shall be prepared to follow Him as he enters upon and accomplishes His work in the world. That work, in the proper sense of the word, does not yet begin. The first section of this division extends from 1: 19 to 1: 34, and contains the witness of the Baptist. The subordinate parts of this section are—(1) vers. 19–28, the witness by the Baptist on the first day spoken of; (2) vers. 29–34, His witness on the second day.

Ver. 19. **And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou?** The preceding verses (1–18) are so strongly marked in character, and so distinctly constitute one coherent whole, that we cannot but place them in a section by themselves. And yet they do not form a distinct preface to the book (such, for example, as we find in Luke 1: 1–4), for the first word of the present verse (with which the regular narrative commences) shows that this section must be connected with what goes before. It is possible that this connection is really very close. The words 'this is the witness of John' do not necessarily mean 'this *witness which follows* is the witness of John;' the Evangelist's ordinary usage in similar cases suggests that the sense intended is rather, 'And of this kind—confirmatory of the preceding statements—is the witness,' etc. Such an interpretation best accounts for the use of the present tense, 'this *is*,' (comp. ver. 15), standing in striking contrast to the past tenses which immediately follow; it also throws light on the remarkably emphatic words which form the first half of ver. 20. Thus viewed, the present section attaches itself to ver. 15; what is there given in a general form is now related with greater fulness in connection with the circumstances of the history. The 'witness' directly intended is that of vers. 19–27; but we must also include the very important testimony borne on the following day, especially that of vers. 33, 34, which presents (in a different form) some of the leading truths of the Prologue. As in the earlier Gospels, the mission of Jesus is introduced by the Baptist; the peculiarity of John's narrative consists in this, that the Baptist's testimony is obtained in answer to a question asked by 'the Jews,' who send a deputation to him 'from Jerusalem,' the centre of the theocracy.

In this mention of 'the Jews' we meet for the first time with one of the most characteristic terms of the Fourth Gospel. In the other Gospels the expression occurs only fifteen or sixteen times, and twelve of these instances are examples of a single phrase, 'King of the Jews,' and that phrase used by Gentiles. The remaining passages are Mark 7: 3; Luke 7: 3, 23: 51; and Matt. 28: 15 (slightly different from the rest in the absence of the article). In this Gospel—in addition to six examples of the title 'King of the Jews,' used as in the other Gospels—we find more than fifty passages in which the Evangelist himself (not quoting from any Gentile) speaks of 'the Jews.' Had the author of this Gospel been a Gentile, this usage might have seemed very natural; but it is no less natural in the case of a writer who, though a Jew by birth, has long been severed from his countrymen through their rejection of his Lord. The leaders and representatives of the nation in this rejection of Jesus are those whom John usually designates as 'the Jews.' When the other Gospels speak of opposition on the part of Pharisees, chief priests, elders, scribes, Sadducees, or lawyers, John (who mentions none of these classes except Pharisees and chief priests, and these not very frequently) is wont to use this general term. The mass of the people, the led as contrasted with the leaders, he speaks of as 'the multitude,' or 'the multitudes.' Hence in most of the passages in which we meet with 'the Jews,' we must understand the party possessed of greatest influence in the nation, the representatives of Judaism, the leaders in opposition to Jesus. Even where the term is used in a wider sense, it does not simply designate the nation; when employed by the Evangelist himself, it almost always bears with it the impress of one thought—that of general unfaithfulness, of a national depravation which culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing to indicate that the deputation here spoken of was sent by the Sanhedrin; but it appears to have been formal and important, composed as it was of persons belonging to the two classes which, in the Old Testament, rep-

20 ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ.
21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet?

resent the service of the Temple (Josh. 3: 3; 2 Chron. 30: 27; Ezek. 44: 15). If we add to this the fact that, as appears from ver. 24, Pharisees also were present, the striking character of the scene before us will be manifest. On the one side is the Baptist, standing alone in the startling strangeness of his prophetic mission; on the other are all who either possessed or had assumed religious authority in Israel —the Jews, the priests, the Levites, and the Pharisees. The question 'Who art thou?' has reference to the supposed personal claims of the Baptist. Might it not be that one who had so suddenly appeared in the wilderness, and who had produced so profound an effect upon all classes, was the very Messiah anxiously waited for at this time? Compare Luke 3: 15.

Ver. 20. **And he confessed, and denied not. And he confessed, I am not the Christ.** The answer of the Baptist is reported with great solemnity. The effect of the double statement, 'he confessed, and denied not' (comp. ver. 3; 1 John 2: 4, 27) is to give peculiar impressiveness to the words: St. John thus brings into relief the single-minded faithfulness of the Baptist, and at the same time corrects mistaken opinions as to the character of his mission (see note on ver. 8). In the reply itself the first word is strongly emphatic, 'It is not I who am the Christ.' The Baptist thus prepares the way for the further statements which he is to make with the view of guiding his hearers to that Christ who is come, and whom with gradually increasing clearness he is to proclaim.

Ver. 21. **And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not.** The question was a natural one, for the thought of the coming of Elijah was intimately associated with that of the coming of Messiah (Mal. 4: 5). The answer seems less natural, for our Lord, when He spoke of the Baptist, described him as 'Elijah who was to come' (Matt. 11: 14). It is possible that even the Baptist himself did not know that he was 'Elijah' in this latter sense, and hence could reply without hesitation that he is not that prophet.—**Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.** A third supposition is tried. Is he 'the prophet?' A comparison of 1: 25 and 7: 40, 41, with 6: 14, 15, seems to lead to the conclusion that there were at this time two currents of opinion with regard to the coming prophet (Deut. 18: 15), the one distinguishing him from the Messiah, the other maintaining that the two characters would be united in 'him that should come.' But that a prophet would certainly appear at the opening of the Messianic age was expected by all. Hence the question, as now put, covered the only other supposition that could explain the important position which the Baptist had

22 And he answered, No. They said therefore unto
him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to
them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?
23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilder-
ness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isa-
24 iah the prophet. [1] And they had been sent from the

[1] Or, *And* certain *had been sent from among the Pharisees.*

assumed, and which appeared to indicate that he was introducing a new era. But the main point with the Baptist is to show that, strictly speaking, he is simply the herald of that era. He is only to prepare the way for Him in whom it both begins and is completed (comp. Matt. 11: 11-13). The new supposition is accordingly repudiated in terms as emphatic as before.

Ver. 22. **They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?** The Baptist has disowned the three suppositions that have been made. He is not 'the Christ,' not 'Elijah,' not 'the prophet.' The deputation now appeal directly to himself to state who he is.

Ver. 23. **He said, I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.** The words are from Isa. 40: 3, and, though slightly modified in form, they completely express the sense of the original passage. To captive Israel, whose warfare is now accomplished, whose iniquity is pardoned, the glorious approach of her Deliverer is proclaimed. He comes to lead back His people through the desert to their own land. The herald's voice sounds in the desert, announcing the coming of the King, commanding that all obstacles be removed from the course of His triumphal march, and that through the wilderness there be made a highway for the Deliverer and for the people whom He has set free. The Baptist takes the words in their true application to the Messianic deliverance and kingdom. He speaks of himself as the herald, or rather as the herald's voice; as in ver. 8, his personality, so to speak, is swallowed up in the message which he came to bring.

Ver. 24. **And some from among the Pharisees had been sent.** We cannot doubt that these words are introduced to lead on to the following statement, rather than to give completeness to the account of the preceding verses. It is not necessary, however, to think of a second and entirely new deputation. The persons now introduced may have formed part of the first body of questioners. But the point of special interest to them is that which meets us in ver. 25, rather than that already spoken of. They were Pharisees, and the Pharisees considered themselves the guardians of the ordinances of religious worship among their countrymen. Hence the significance

25 Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him,
Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ,
26 neither Elijah, neither the prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize [1] with water: in the midst
27 of you standeth one whom ye know not, *even* he that
cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not

[1] Or, *in*.

of the statements in 4: 1, 9: 13–15, 12: 42; and also of the question which is now addressed to the Baptist. That question does not necessarily indicate a hostile bearing towards him; nor during the earlier part of the life of Jesus do the Pharisees in general appear to have opposed the Saviour in the same manner as the 'Jews' (comp. on 3: 1, 7: 32).

Ver. 25. **And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?** The 'Jews,' the representatives of the theocratic spirit of the people, had been mainly concerned about the position of the Baptist in relation to the national hopes. Could it be that he was about to assume the government of the nation, and lead it to victory? The Pharisees concern themselves more about the rite administered by the Baptist. It is the baptism of persons belonging to the chosen people that startles them. They might have viewed his baptism without surprise had he invited to it those only who were beyond the pale of Israel. But that one who, by his own confession, was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, should thus administer a rite symbolical of cleansing to those who, as Jews, were already clean, this it was that threw them into perplexity. On the significance of John's baptism, see notes on chap. 3: 5, and Matt. 3: 6.

Vers. 26, 27. **John answered them, saying, I baptize in water.** The meaning of the Baptist's answer has been greatly obscured by the insertion of 'but' after these words. It has thus been supposed that the object of the Baptist is to depreciate his baptism by bringing it into comparison with the baptism in the Spirit administered by Jesus. The two baptisms, however, are not as yet compared with one another. What John depreciated was himself, not the rite which he administered; and at ver. 31 he expressly magnifies his baptism, and points out its high prophetic significance. From this last-mentioned verse the import of the present clause must be determined. Even now John means, I baptize in water that I may call attention to Him whose way I am commissioned to prepare. For this purpose I am a 'voice of one that crieth;' for this purpose also 'I baptize in water.'—**In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, coming after me, the latchet of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose..** Now follows the great fact explanatory of all this divine work of preparation, that the One waited

28 worthy to unloose. These things were done in [1] Bethany beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.
29 On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which [2] taketh

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[1] Many ancient authorities read *Bethabarah*, some *Betharabah*.

[2] Or, *beareth the sin*.

for is come. Three stages of His manifestation, however, are to be marked; and as yet we have only reached the first, 'He standeth in the midst of you.' So standing, He is distinguished by three characteristics: (1) 'Ye know' Him 'not,'—the 'ye' being emphatic, ye to whom He would gladly reveal Himself: (2) He cometh 'after me' (see ver. 15): (3) His glory is so great that the Baptist is not worthy to unloose the latchet of His sandal. On the last words see note on Mark 1: 7. Such is the first testimony of the Baptist to Jesus. The fuller testimonies have yet to come. At this point, therefore, the narrative pauses to tell us that this testimony was given at the very place where the Baptist was at the moment making so profound an impression upon the people.

Ver. 28. **These things were done in Bethany beyond Jordan.** There can be no doubt that Bethabara is not the true reading in this verse. Origen, writing in the third century, states that he found *Bethany* in almost all copies of the Gospel. This statement is decisive. It cannot be set aside, nor indeed is it even lessened in weight, by the fact that Origen himself, owing to his inability to identify Bethany, believed Bethabara to be the place intended. The existence of another Bethany, near Jerusalem, presents no difficulty, as it was not uncommon for two places to bear the same name. The instances of Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10; Mark 6: 45), Carmel, Cæsarea, etc., are well known. It is even possible that the two names, though alike written Bethania in Greek, may in their original Hebrew form have been different words; just as, for instance, the 'Abel' of Gen. 4: 2 is altogether different in actual form from the 'Abel' of 2 Sam. 20: 14. This Bethany may have been small and unimportant; Bethabara, on the other hand, seems to have been so well known that the addition of the words 'beyond Jordan' would have been less natural. Of the situation of Bethany we know no more than we are told in this verse (comp. chap. 2: 1). It has been variously placed—near Jericho, near Scythopolis (a few miles south of the sea of Galilee), and by one recent writer, Caspari, a little to the north of that sea. The last opinion seems the least probable of the three. The second testimony of the Baptist is now presented to us.

Ver. 29. **The next day he seeth Jesus coming unto him.** The 'day' is that immediately following the day of the first testimony, and the climactic arrangement of the narrative is already perceptible. Already Jesus is in a different position. On the previous day He was spoken of as 'coming after' John; now He is 'coming unto' Him.

Then He stood unknown, unrecognized, amidst the throng; now He is expressly pointed out by His forerunner. Then it was His elevation above John that was expressed; now it is the greatness of His work in itself.—**And saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** The translation of this clause has been disputed (see the margin of the Authorized Version), but without good reason. The idea of 'taking' or 'bearing' sin is indeed of very common occurrence in the Old Testament; but it is not expressed by the word here used, which denotes *taking away, removal.* In meaning, however, the two renderings would almost coincide, since the metaphor of the verse is sacrificial: in the thought of *bearing* sin as an atoning sacrifice is involved the *removal* of the punishment deserved and of the sin itself. There is only one other passage of the New Testament in which this expression is found, 1 John 3: 5, and there the meaning is very clear. A much more difficult question remains: What is the Baptist's meaning when he speaks of '*the Lamb* of God?' The answer which perhaps now finds most favor with commentators is, that this particular image was directly suggested to his mind by the memorable prophecy of Isa. 53, in one verse of which (ver. 7) there is an allusion to 'a lamb.' But there are serious difficulties in the way of this explanation. A reference to the chapter will show that in that verse the prophet speaks of the 'lamb' as an example of uncomplaining patience, and not in connection with taking away sin. 'He was oppressed, although he submitted himself, and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers; and he opened not his mouth.' Again, had the prophecy of this chapter been definitely the source of the Baptist's words, we might surely have looked for some close resemblances of language. But such coincidences are not to be found in any part of the chapter: the ideas of taking and bearing sin are prominent, but they are expressed by words altogether different from that here used. If we are thus obliged to look away from Isaiah's great prophecy of Messiah, we naturally turn to the Mosaic ritual of sacrifice. Again we are met by difficulties. It would seem impossible to bring in here the thought of any other than the *sin-offering*, and yet it was only occasionally, and almost as an exception, that a sin-offering consisted of a lamb (Lev. 4: 32). The lamb of the morning and evening sacrifices was a burnt-offering. There remains only two other explanations of the phrase. It is just possible that 'the lamb' merely indicates a sacrificial victim, the gentleness and harmlessness of this animal making it especially suitable as a type. It is, however, much more probable that the Baptist spoke of the *paschal lamb.* The peculiar definiteness of the expression ('*the* Lamb of God') will in this case need no explanation: no thought was more familiar to the Israelite than that of the lamb for the Passover; and, we may add, few thoughts are brought out in this Gospel with greater distinctness than the relation of the Lord Jesus to the paschal sacrifice and feast (see notes on chaps. 6 and 19). As the institution of the Passover pre-

30 away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I
said, After me cometh a man which is become before
31 me: for he was [1] before me. And I knew him not;
but that he should be made manifest unto Israel, for

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[1] Gr. *first in regard of me.*

ceded the general Mosaic legislation, its laws and arrangements lie without the circle of the ordinary ritual of sacrifices, and combine ideas which were otherwise kept distinct. The paschal supper resembles the peace-offerings, the characteristic of which was the sacred feast that succeeded the presentation of the victim (Lev. 7: 15),—an emblem of the fellowship between the accepted worshipper and his God. But the sin-offering also is included, as a reference to the original institution of the Passover will at once show. The careful sprinkling of the blood upon the door-posts was intended to be more than a sign to the destroying angel whom to spare. The lamb was slain and the blood sprinkled that atonement might be made for sin: when Israel is consecrated anew to God, the sin and the deserved punishment removed, the sacred feast is celebrated. It has been suggested that the nearness of the Passover (see chap. 2: 13) may have presented these thoughts to the Baptist's mind. It is still more likely that one who was enabled so clearly to discern the meaning of the Old Testament as to recognize the removal of 'the sin of *the world*' as the object of Messiah's coming, would see from the first how fitly that ordinance, in which Israel's redemption began, associated itself with the approaching redemption of the world. It is the world's Passover, both the sacrifice and the feast, that John sees to be at hand. With this verse compare especially 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; Rev. 5: 6, 9. The marginal references will show to what an extent this Gospel is pervaded by the thought of 'the world' as the object of Christ's saving work.

Ver. 30. See the note upon ver. 15. Here, as there, the words refer to testimony given by the Baptist to Jesus at some point of time and on some occasion not recorded.

Ver. 31. **And I knew him not; but that he may be made manifest to Israel, therefore came I, baptizing in water.** The explanation of the first clause of this verse will be best given when we come to ver. 33. The object which the Baptist here assigns for his work of baptizing may at first sight seem to be different from that mentioned in the earlier Gospels, where he is spoken of as sent to prepare the way of the Lord. Attention to the words used by John will remove all difficulty. 'Israel' is not to be limited to the Jewish nation. It embraces the true theocracy of God,—neither Jews nor Gentiles as such, but all who will believe (comp. on vers. 47, 49). 'Made manifest,' again, is not a mere outward manifestation, but a revelation of Jesus as He is. Thus the meaning of the words is not, 'I baptize in water in order that Jesus may come to my baptism,

32 this cause came I baptizing [1] with water. And John
bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon
33 him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to

[1] Or, *in*.

and may there receive a testimony from on high:' but, 'I baptize that I may declare the necessity of that forsaking of sin without which no true manifestation of Jesus can be made to the heart.' The words in their real meaning, therefore, are in perfect harmony with the accounts of the Synoptists. The advance of thought from the unrecognized Jesus of ver. 26 to the 'made manifest' of ver. 31 is obvious. It corresponds to the 'standeth' of ver. 26, and the 'coming unto him' of ver. 29; with the fact, also, that the one is the first, the other the second, testimony of the Baptist.

Ver. 32. **And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending.** The effect of what the Baptist had seen had remained, and still remains with him in all its power: 'I *have* beheld.'—**And it abode upon him.** John had not merely seen the Spirit descend with dove-like motion upon Jesus; he had also seen that it 'abode' upon Him,—the symbol of an abiding and permanent possession.

Ver. 33. **And I knew him not.** The first clause of this verse, like that of ver. 31, is attended with peculiar difficulty, for it is hardly possible to imagine that, intimately connected as the families of Jesus and of the Baptist were, the former should have been for thirty years personally unknown to the latter. Moreover Matt. 3: 14 seems distinctly to imply not only that such personal acquaintanceship existed before the baptism, but that the Baptist even then knew Jesus as greater than himself. Here, however, he says that until after the descent of the Spirit he 'knew Him not.' Without noticing the other explanations which have been given, we may observe that the solution of the difficulty is to be found in keeping distinctly before us the *official* and not *personal* light in which both Jesus and the Baptist are presented to us here. No denial of *personal* knowledge of Jesus has any bearing upon the point which the Baptist would establish. He is himself an official messenger of God, intrusted with a commission which he is to continue to discharge until such time as he is superseded by the actual arrival of Him whose way he prepares. But this latter is also the 'Sent' of God, and has particular credentials to produce. Until these are produced, the herald of His approach cannot 'know' Him in the only character in which he has to do with Him. No private acquaintanceship with Him—and, we may even say, no private convictions as to His Messianic character—will justify that recognition of Him before which alone the herald may give way. The great King from whom the herald and the Ambassador are alike sent has named a particular sign which shall attest the position of the

baptize [1] with water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth [1] with the
34 Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

[3] Or, *in.*

latter, and close the labors of the former. That sign must be exhibited before the herald of the Ambassador's approach will be warranted to withdraw. Until then the one 'knows' not the other.

**But he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.** As to the sign, comp. ver. 32. It is the token that in Jesus are fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament with regard to the pouring out of the Spirit in the Messianic age, and especially to the impartation of the Spirit to the Messiah Himself (Isa. 61: 1; Luke 41: 18),—prophecies which describe the crowning glory of the latter days. John's baptism could only point to the laying aside of sin; that of Jesus brought with it the quickening into spiritual life (comp. on 3: 5). It is to be noticed that the words 'Holy Spirit' are here used without the article. The object is to fix our attention, not upon the Spirit in His personality, but upon the power of that spiritual influence which He exerts. It would be better to translate, 'the power of the Holy Spirit,' were it not difficult to use such an expression, in conformity with the idiom of the English tongue, in the many passages where this particular form of the original is employed.

Ver. 34. **And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.** 'I *have* seen,' for the result of the seeing abides unchanged and ever present: 'I *have* borne witness,' for the Baptist has entered on that one witness-bearing for which he was sent (ver. 7), and which it will henceforth be his office simply to repeat. It is particularly to be noticed that the 'witness' referred to is not that Jesus baptizes with the Spirit, but that He is 'the Son of God,'—a designation which expresses the divine nature and character of Jesus, and with this the relation in which He stands to the Father. In one aspect He is God; in another He is the Son of God, the Son distinct from the Father. The link of connection between the transcendent conclusion of the Baptist and the fact upon which it rests is probably to be found in the thought that He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, who therefore has the power to impart the gifts and influence of the Spirit of God, must be Divine. The special form which this confession of our Lord's divinity takes was, we cannot doubt, determined by the words spoken from heaven: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 3: 17).

It has been sometimes maintained that 'Son of God' must be un-

## Chapter I. 35-51.

### *Jesus manifests Himself to hearts open to receive Him.*

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two
36 of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he

derstood as a mere designation of 'the Messiah.' For this opinion we believe that no evidence can be found, either in Scripture or in early Jewish writings. There are, indeed, passages in the Old Testament, acknowledged to be prophecies of the Messiah, in which a Divine Sonship is attributed to Him (see especially Ps. 2: 7); but the name seems to be always indicative of nature, and not merely of office. How the name was understood by the Jews of our Lord's day may be seen from chap. 5: 18, 19, 10: 29, 30, 33.

It is important to compare this section with the corresponding portions of the other Gospels. The omissions are very remarkable. We say nothing of the Evangelist's silence as to the circumstances of our Lord's birth and early years; this belongs to the general plan of the Gospel, which here agrees with that of Mark. But it is noteworthy that nothing is said of the baptism of Jesus, or of the temptation which followed. To the baptism, however, there is a clear allusion in vers. 33, 34; hence its place in the order of events is before ver. 19. The temptation also was at an end befere John 'saw Jesus coming unto him' (ver. 29), On the other hand, these verses contain many coincidences in language with the Synoptic Gospels. John's application of Isa. 40: 3, and the contrast which he draws between himself, baptizing in water, and Him who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, are related by every Evangelist. In all the Gospels, also, we find words similar to those of ver. 27.

### *Jesus manifests Himself to hearts open to receive Him.* 35-51.

Contents. The same general subject is continued in this section—Jesus taking His place on the stage of history. We pass now, however, from the witness of the Baptist, given on two successive days, to the manifestation of Himself by Jesus to hearts open to receive and welcome Him. This manifestation takes place upon two successive days. The subordinate parts of the present section are—(1) vers. 35–42, witness borne on the first of the two new days (the third day from that of ver. 19); (2) vers. 43–51, witness borne on the second day (the fourth day).

Vers. 35, 36. In these verses we have a new testimony borne by the Baptist to Jesus. In ver. 29 we were simply told that John 'seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith;' *to whom* the words were spoken we know not. There is therefore great importance in the definite statement of verse 35, that John now spoke in the presence of disciples. The Baptist came to deliver a general witness respecting Jesus; but he also came to direct to Jesus all over whom he had gained influence. The words which he utters are few, so that the second testimony may seem inferior to the first. We may perhaps,

37 walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And
the two disciples heard him speak, and they follow-
38 ed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them fol-
lowing, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And
they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being in-
39 terpreted, [1] Master), where abidest thou? He saith

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[1] Or, *Teacher.*

say that it is not really inferior. When the earlier words (ver. 29) had once made clear what was signified by the announcement of 'the Lamb of God,' this title by itself, in its own simplicity, really conveyed a fuller meaning. 'The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world' brought to mind the paschal *sacrifice;* but in pointing to Jesus as 'the Lamb of God,' the Baptist, implying all that he had expressed before, presents to the thought all the symbolism of the words,—with the true paschal *sacrifice* joining the true *feast*

Ver. 37. **And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.** The witness of the Baptist has its proper effect,—an effect, we cannot doubt, foreseen and designed by himself (chap. 3: 27-30). Those who listen to it turn from him, and follow Jesus.

Ver. 38. **And Jesus turned and beheld them, following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?** They who thus follow Jesus shall not do so in vain. As in the sense of their own unworthiness they walked after Him, He turned, and inquired what they sought.—**And they said unto him, Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher, where abidest thou?** 'Where is Thy permanent resting-place and home, that as pupils we may seek Thee there, and may abide with Thee till we have seen the glory of which we have heard?' By the title Rabbi (which strictly meant *my master* or *lord,* but which in the time of Jesus had already come to be applied to teachers) they had been wont to address their own master (chap. 3: 26); and they naturally give the same name of honour to Jesus. When they have done with 'seeking,' when they have found Him, they will say more (com. 13: 13).

Ver. 39. **He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode, and abode with him that day.** The seeker shall not seek in vain. They had asked where He abode; and that the answer of Jesus was a direct meeting of their request is proved by the statement made by the Evangelist, that 'they came and saw where He abode.' The nature of the intercourse is not described. We are left only to imagine from the confession of Andrew in ver. 41 what must have been the solemn teachings, the gracious communications of Himself by Jesus, the patient instructing of ignorance, the tender removal of doubts, until, in all the joy of their new discovery, they could say, 'We have found.'

unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour.
40 One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed
41 him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being inter-

This much, however, we seem entitled to infer from the thrice-repeated 'abide' or 'abode,'—a word characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, and always full of deep and solemn import,—that the Evangelist designs to convey to us something more than the thought of mere outward presence with Jesus.—**It was about the tenth hour.** There are four passages in which the Evangelist directly refers to the hour of the day at which an event occurred (see chap. 4: 6, 52; 19: 14). But for the last of these passages it might be natural to suppose that John, like the other Evangelists, reckons time from sunrise, an hour being the twelfth part of the (varying) interval between sunrise and sunset. As, however, Mark records (chap. 15: 25) that Jesus was crucified at the 'third hour' (between 8 and 9 A. M.), and John expressly states that His *condemnation* was later than the 'sixth hour,' the probability that the latter writer follows a different reckoning is very strong. Further investigation has shown that at the very time when this book was written a mode of computation substantially agreeing with our own was known in Asia Minor (where John wrote) and elsewhere. It is easy to see that in such a matter as this a writer naturally follows the custom of those amongst whom he lives, and whom he has immediately in view as his readers. We shall assume, therefore, in each case that the hour (of fixed length, not variable) is reckoned from midnight or noon. Here the tenth hour will no doubt be the hour between 9 and 10 A. M.

Ver. 40. **One of the two which heard from John and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.** Andrew belonged to Bethsaida (ver. 44), and is again referred to in 6: 8, 12: 22. That he is now spoken of as the brother of Peter is an interesting indication of the importance attached by the Evangelist to the latter. There is little reason to doubt that the second of the two was the Evangelist himself. Simon Peter, who has not yet been mentioned, is introduced to us here as if he were well known to the reader—an illustration of the writer's tendency to anticipate what is hereafter to be fully explained: we have an equally striking instance in the mention of Mary in chap. 11: 2.

Ver. 41. **He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).** The peculiar language of this verse leads directly to the conclusion that each of the two disciples men-

42 preted, [1] Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of [2] John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, [3] Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto

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[1] That is, *Anointed.*
[2] Gr. *Joanes:* called in Matt. xvi. 17, *Jonah.*
[3] That is, *Rock* or *Stone.*

tioned in the previous verse had gone in search of his brother, and the fact is not without interest as confirming the supposition that the second of the two disciples was John. Andrew and his brother, John and his brother, seem to have been the only two pairs of brothers in the apostolic band. The finding was not accidental. Andrew had gone in search of Peter, John of James. When Andrew found the object of his search, his joyful announcement was, 'We have found the Messiah.' This Hebrew term—occurring only twice in the New Testament, here and at 4: 25, in the mouth of the woman of Samaria—denotes 'the Anointed One;' and is immediately interpreted by the Evangelist, the Greek word 'Christ' having the same meaning. One of the great hopes of Israel was fulfilled.

Ver. 42. **He brought him to Jesus.** There can be little doubt that Peter had shared the expectations and longings of his brother Andrew, as well as of all those more earnest spirits of the time who were waiting for 'the consolation of Israel.' He too had been 'seeking,' and he too finds.—**Jesus looking upon him said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas.** Jesus looked upon him with that divine glance which read the heart (comp. 2: 25); and, following the custom of which so many illustrations are afforded in the Old Testament, marked the great crisis in his life which had now arrived by giving him a new name. 'Cephas,' with which corresponds the Greek word Petros (a 'stone' or 'piece of rock'). How much importance was attached by the Evangelist to this name given to his brother apostle will appear on other occasions in the course of his Gospel. The name Johannes, or John, corresponds to the Hebrew Jochanan; in Matt. 16: 17 the same name is represented in a slightly different form (Jona).

Ver. 43. **The next day he would go forth into Galilee.** On this day begins the journey consummated at chap. 2: 1 (see note).—**And he findeth Philip; and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me.** The first two disciples had 'sought' and 'followed' Jesus; then they had found Him. Now Jesus (seeks and) 'finds' Philip, and bids him follow Him (compare the two parables in Matt. 13: 44, 46). We are left to infer that the command was immediately obeyed. The calling of Philip and of Nathanael is recorded by John alone; both Matthew and Mark, relate that Jesus called to Him Andrew and

44 him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida,
45 of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth
Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him,
of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did
46 write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. And
Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come
out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and

Peter, James and John (Matt. 4: 18-22; Mark 1: 16-20; compare Luke 5: 1-11); but it will be remembered that this was a second summons, later (by some months, probably) than the events of which we are reading here.

Ver. 44. **Now Philip was of Bethsaida, out of the city of Andrew and Peter.** This verse appears to be inserted for the purpose of clearly showing that these three disciples were Galileans. The next verse would lead to a similar inference in regard to Nathanael, and this inference is confirmed by chap 21 : 2. It is thus an undesigned (but not the less striking) proof of the Johannine authorship of this Gospel that a similar statement is not made with regard to the two disciples of vers. 37-40. John is aware that he was himself well known to be a Galilean. In simple consciousness that he was so, and that no one would doubt it, he omits notice of the fact in his own case and that of his brother. But he felt it of importance to bring out the Galilean birth of the others. We might have supposed them to be Judeans; but Judas is the only Judean of the apostolic circle. The importance of the fact in the mind of the Evangelist is connected with the opinion entertained by him of 'the Jews' and of 'Judas.'

Ver. 45. **Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.** It was in all probability on the journey from Bethany beyond Jordan to Cana of Galilee that Jesus had 'found' Philip. As on the journey recorded in Luke 26: 13, the conversation turned on the things concerning the promised Saviour which were contained in 'Moses and all the prophets;' and to this conversation the particular form of conviction impressed upon the mind of Philip was due. He does not speak of Jesus simply as the Messiah (ver. 41), but as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. There is an advance in fulness on the confession of ver. 41, and the special character of the advance is important; it helps to explain the words of the following verse. There is nothing accidental in the finding of Nathanael. Philip had gone in search of him in particular. Can we doubt that it was because he knew him to be specially fitted and ready to be a follower of Jesus?

Ver. 46. **And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.** The mind of Nathanael (who, from his close

47 see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith
of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no
48 guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest

association with Philip, is probably to be identified with the Bartholomew of the earlier Gospels) is, as we shall more fully see below (vers. 47, 48), full at the moment of that prophetic hope the fulfillment of which was associated, not with Nazareth, but with Bethlehem or Jerusalem. To him all good was summed up in the thought of the coming King; and it may have been that at the moment a place unconnected with the great promise of God seemed to him a place from which no good could come. Such considerations go far towards explaining his disparaging remark; though they do not completely remove the impression which we receive from the words, that Nazareth was a place held in very low esteem. We have, however, no other information that such prejudice (whether well or ill founded) existed; and the only notices in Scripture which can throw light on the subject are the records of the obstinate unbelief of the Nazarenes (Matt. 13: 58) and their attempt upon the life of Jesus (Luke 4: 29).

Ver. 47. **Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** Again, as at ver. 43, we are left to infer that the call thus addressed to Nathanael was obeyed; and in his obedience to it he illustrates the frame of mind for which he is immediately commended by Jesus. He is ingenuous, willing to be taught, ready to receive what is shown to him to be truth, however strongly it may conflict with his prepossessions. Jesus saw him as he drew near, and commended him as a genuine Israelite in whom there was no guile. The last words have been sometimes understood as if they were explanatory of the term Israelite, that term, again, being supposed, together with the word 'guile,' to allude to the history of Jacob. As the name of Jacob ('supplanter') was changed to Israel ('prince of God') the characteristic of this patriarch's true descendants will be absence of guile. The suggestion is ingenious, but for several reasons hardly tenable. (1) It is guile of an entirely different kind that is here referred to; (2) There is no special connection between the qualities displayed by Jacob on the occasion when he received the name Israel and those that here distinguish Nathanael; (3) The part of Jacob's history present to the mind of Jesus, in ver. 51, was the vision at Bethel, which belongs to a period much earlier than that in which his name was changed; (4) It is difficult to believe that 'Israelite' is intended to convey no meaning beyond absence of guile. It is rather to be taken as denoting one who belongs to the true people of God (comp. ver. 31); and the words that follow are then added to bring out its special meaning upon this occasion. Nathanael, in short, is 'of God,' is 'of the truth,' has no selfish impure aims, and therefore he shall be fully taught.

Ver. 48. **Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?** The words of Jesus had been spoken while Nathanael

thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the
49 fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel.

was drawing near, and the latter heard them. He does not deny the truth of the commendation, and yet it can hardly be said, on the other hand, that he accepts it. It is enough for him that he sees that he is not discerned by one whom he had previously met, and what he asks is, Whence gettest Thou Thy knowledge of me? Who has told Thee anything about me?—**Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.** Jesus replies by referring to a previous, probably recent, incident in his history. The heart of the guileless man had been so moved by the great thoughts stirring at that time with respect to the Saviour at hand, that he had retired under a fig tree to study the Scriptures, or meditate, or pray. It is this that (as the Greek implies) is now brought to his recollection—not his *being* under the fig tree, but his *having gone* under it; and we are thus rather invited than forbidden to suppose that the emotions filling his heart at the moment, and impelling him to seek solitude, had been peculiarly strong. Then Jesus had seen him, and had recognized in him one of His sheep, just as His sheep recognize Him (10: 16). If the incident had taken place in Nathanael's own Cana, it must have been all the more striking to him that it should thus be known. But, however this may have been, these wonderful words of Jesus, coming suddenly upon him after long preparation for them and after the instructions just given by Philip, at once set his heart on fire, and drew from him the memorable confession which follows.

Ver. 49. **Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel.** The confession is the highest that has yet been made, for it is impossible to understand 'Son of God' as the simple equivalent of Messiah (see note on ver. 34). Yet it is a confession coming out of the very heart of Old Testament prophecy, and to be accounted for by those circumstances of Nathanael's past history and present position that have been already noticed. It was not merely of a great Deliverer that the prophets had spoken. They had spoken not less of Jehovah Himself as coming, and as coming to be their Deliverer and their King. In the second Psalm, in particular, we find the two ideas of the Son of God and of Zion's King closely conjoined; and in the seventy-second Psalm the psalmist had described in glowing language that kingdom of peace and righteousness, extending over the whole earth, of which a shadow and type were afforded by the reign of Solomon. But if it be undeniable that these ideas were imbedded in the Old Testament, there is nothing inconceivable in their being gathered from it and enunciated by these who in meditation and prayer had caught its

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.
51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels

spirit. Add to this the self-evidencing power of the Person of Jesus, which must have been so much more to Nathanael than the mere record can be to us, and we need not wonder that he should thus acknowledge Jesus. Nor is there any warrant for describing his feelings as vague. What he did was to rise to the height of Old Testament prophecy; what he saw was that this must be Jehovah that was to come, the universal King. The three confessions have risen as they have succeeded one another. Higher than the last they cannot rise. The Lord Himself is come; His kingdom is without limit and without end.

Ver. 50. **Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.** An intimation of that growth of divine revelation which this Gospel teaches us shall be made the portion of all,—of some to an ever-increasing fulness of blessing, of others to an ever-increasing fulness of judgment. For the one, see chap. 14: 12; for the other, chap. 5: 20. These 'greater things' are more particularly mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 51. **And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you.** This is the first occasion on which we find the repeated 'Verily,' so characteristic of the discourses related in this Gospel. The formula is always employed to mark some important step in a discourse, where the words of Jesus either take some new start, or rise to some higher stage. Both these conditions are fulfilled in the verse before us. As to the first, it will be observed that Jesus no longer addresses Nathanael alone: the plural instead of the singular is used and we must understand that He is speaking to all the disciples. As to the second, again, the words of themselves suggest the higher stage of revelation promised.—**Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.** The figure is taken from Jacob's dream (Gen. 28: 12). A wanderer from his father's house and country, he is encouraged by a vision which teaches him that earth is united with heaven, and that God's messengers descend to minister to those who are the objects of God's care. If the ascent of the angels is mentioned (in Gen. 28) *before* the descent, this is because to Jacob is shown an intercourse that already exists, not one that now begins. Some angels are already returning from earth, their ministries accomplished. What Jacob saw in vision is now in the highest sense fulfilled. There is real and unceasing intercourse between earth and heaven. It is to Jesus that the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

descend; it is from Him that they return to heaven; through His presence on earth this union between earth and heaven exists. Even though He is in His state of humiliation, it is His bidding that the angels do. Perhaps it is this thought that accounts for the mention (in *this* verse) of the ascending angels first. These words have no direct reference to the angelic visits received by Jesus at different points of His earthly ministry; still less can we refer them to miracles to be hereafter performed, greater even than that displayed to Nathanael, miracles of which the next chapter will furnish the first example. We have simply a symbolical representation of the fact that through the Incarnation and sufferings of Jesus heaven is opened, is brought into the closest and most constant communion with earth, so that the latter is itself transfigured with the glory of God's special abode. This interpretation is confirmed by two circumstances mentioned in the verse: 1) Nathanael is to see 'heaven standing open,'—not 'opened' as if it might again be closed, but opened so as to continue open. It is the complete withdrawal of the inner veil of the Tabernacle, so that all the children of God, now made priests and high priests unto God, even the Father, may pass freely into the innermost sanctuary and out of it again without interruption and without end. (2) Jesus speaks of Himself as the 'Son of man.' This important designation, often used by Jesus of Himself, once only used of Him by another (Acts 7: 56), is not, as some maintain, a simple equivalent of 'Messiah.' It expresses rather One in whom all that truly belongs to humanity is realized, and by whom it is represented, Jesus is the Son of *man*, connected with no special race, or class, or condition, equally associated with all, equally near to all, in whom all are equally interested, and may be equally blessed. The designation is not a fourth confession, additional to the three that have been already made, for it comes from the lips of Jesus Himself. It is rather that in which all the confessions meet, the expression of the Personality to which they all belong. Jesus is the Incarnate Word, and as such He is the 'Messiah,' the One 'of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,' the 'Son of God and King of Israel.' Every child of humanity, realizing his true humanity in Him, has as his own the blessings associated with these three aspects of the Redeemer. He is anointed with the Holy Spirit, lives in that love which is the fulfilling of the law, is a son in the house of the Heavenly Father, himself a king. These are the 'greater things' which every one who is an 'Israelite indeed' shall see in the new creation introduced by the 'Word become flesh,' and enlightened by the full brightness of that Light in whose presence old things pass away, and all things are made new.

## CHAPTER 2: 1–11.

### *The Miracle at Cana of Galilee.*

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of

*The Miracle at Cana of Galilee.*—Vers. 1–11.

CONTENTS.—The general subject of the second great division of the Gospel is continued in this section. It contains an account of the miracle at Cana of Galilee, in which, as we are told at ver. 11, Jesus 'manifested His glory.' The Redeemer is still in the circle of His disciples and friends, and there are no traces of His approaching conflict with the world. Our thoughts are directed solely to Himself, and to the glorious nature of that dispensation which He is to introduce.

[This miracle of *transformation* is a fit beginning of Christ's works. His whole mission was to transform sinners into saints, grief into joy, the world into the kingdom of heaven. It is also significant that he began His miracles in the bosom of the *family*, which is the first institution of God on earth, and the nursery of the state and the church. His presence, with His mother and disciples, at a wedding feast sanctifies and elevates marriage and every innocent joy, and condemns that monkish asceticism which flees away from society instead of leavening it with the gospel, and which hates the order of nature instead of elevating it to the sphere of divine grace.—P. S.]

Ver. 1. **And the third day.** The third day, as reckoned from the day last mentioned (chap. 1: 43–51); the *sixth* day referred to in these chapters. The first is the day of the Baptist's interview, at Bethany, with the priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem (1: 19–28). On the second (1: 29–34), John bears testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God. The third is the day on which the two disciples follow Jesus (1: 35–42). On the next day Jesus sets out for Galilee (1: 43). That day, the next, and part of the third day may have been spent in travelling; for, if Bethany was in the neighborhood of Bethabara, and if the latter may be identified with the modern Beit-nimrim, the distance traversed even to Nazareth must have been more than eighty English miles. Very possibly, however, Bethany may have lain farther north (see note on chap. 1: 21).—**There was a marriage**, or marriage-feast. The feast, which was the chief constituent in the ceremonies attending marriage, extended over several days,—as seven (Gen. 29: 27; Judg. 14: 12), or even fourteen (Tobit 8: 19).—**In Cana of Galilee.** There is a Kanah mentioned in the book of Joshua (19: 28) as one of the towns in the territory of Asher, situated near Zidon. This cannot be the place referred to here. No other town of the same name is mentioned by any sacred writer except John, who in every instance marks the place as Cana *of Galilee.* From this many have hastily inferred that 'of Galilee' was part of the name, distinguishing this village from some other Cana,—perhaps from that mentioned above, which (though really within the limits of Galilee) lay near to Phœnicia. Two villages of Galilee claim to be the Cana of this chapter,—Kefr-Kenna, four or five miles north-east of Nazareth; and Khurbet-Cana, about eleven miles north of the same

2 Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and
Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the mar-
3 riage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Je-

place. The latter village is usually said to bear the name Kana-el-Jelil (*i. e.* Cana of Galilee); if so, and if the antiquity of the name could be established, this might be decisive, although even then it would be hard to understand how Christian tradition could so long regard Kefr-Kenna as the scene of our Lord's first miracle, when within a few miles there existed a place bearing the very name found in the Gospel. The question cannot be further discussed here: we will only express a strong conviction that Kefr-Kenna is the Cana of our narrative. It seems probable that John himself has added the words 'of Galilee,' that he may lay stress upon the *province*, not the town. To him the point of main interest is, that this manifestation of the Saviour's glory took place in *Galilee*.—**And the mother of Jesus was there**,—already present as a friend, possibly a relative. Mary comes before us twice in this Gospel, at the commencement and at the close of our Lord's public life (2: 1–11, and 19: 25–27), and is also referred to in another passage (6: 42); but she is never mentioned by name. As for his own name, the Evangelist always substitutes words expressive of relationship to Jesus ('the disciple whom Jesus loved'), so with him Mary's name gives place to 'the mother of Jesus.' Both here and in chap. 19 his designation has special significance. It expresses not only the light in which she appeared to John, but that in which he knew that she appeared to Jesus. It is essential to the spirit of the narrative to behold in Jesus one who, with the warmest filial affection, acknowledged Mary as His mother. Thus only do we see the yielding of the very closest earthly relationship to yet higher claims. The word of Jesus, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,' must in its spirit be exemplified in His own case. Most fitting, therefore, is the use of the tenderest designation here. All that is dear and sacred in the name of mother was felt by Him in its deepest reality at the very time when He showed that every earthly tie must give way at the call of His Father in heaven.

Ver. 2. **And Jesus also was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.** The form of the sentence shows that our chief attention is to be fixed on Jesus, not on the disciples. They were invited as His disciples. Those who came were probably the five or six mentioned in chap. 1, viz. Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and John himself (and probably James).

Ver. 3. **And when wine was wanting.** The failure (which must be understood as complete) may have been occasioned by the long continuance of the festivities, but more probably arose from the presence of several unexpected guests.—**The mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.** Nothing was more natural than that Mary should be the one to point out to her Son the perplexity of the family; but the whole tenor of the narrative compels

4 sus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus
saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with

attention to one thought alone. The absolute singleness with which Jesus listens to the voice of His heavenly Father is the point to be brought out. Had it been consistent with His mission to lend help at the summons of any human authority, no bidding would have been so powerful as that of His mother. Many conjectures as to Mary's object in these words are at once set aside by the nature of His answer. There may have been in her mind no definite idea of the kind of help that might be afforded, but she felt that help was needed, and that what was needed could be given by her Son. The reply of Jesus, however, shows that, besides perplexity and faith, there was also presumption in Mary's words: she spoke as one who still had the right to suggest and to influence His action.

Ver. 4. **And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?** The English words convey an impression of disrespect and harshness which is absent from the original. This use of the Greek word for 'woman' is consistent with the utmost respect. In Homer, for example (*Iliad*, 24: 300), Priam thus addresses Hecuba, his queen, and other examples of the same kind might easily be given. This Gospel itself shows that the word is not out of place where the deepest love and compassion are expressed: see chap. 19: 26; 20: 13, 15. Yet the contrast of 'woman' and 'mother' must strike every one who reads with attention. The relation of mother, however precious in its own sphere, cannot be allowed to enter into that in which Jesus now stands. John does not relate the incident recorded in Matt. 12: 46–50; Mark 3: 31–35; Luke 8: 19–21; but the same thought is present here. Still more distinctly is this lesson taught in the words that follow, 'What have I to do with thee?' The rendering defended by some Roman Catholic writers (though not found in the Vulgate, or in the Rhemish Testament of 1852), 'What is that to thee and me?'—that is, 'Why should we concern ourselves with this failure of the wine?'—is altogether impossible. The phrase is a common one, occurring in Judg. 11: 12; 2 Sam. 16: 10, 19: 22; 1 Kings 17: 18; 2 Kings 3: 13; 2 Chron. 35: 21; Matt. 8: 29; Mark 1: 24, 5: 7; Luke 4: 34, 8: 28: comp. also Josh. 22: 24; 2 Kings 9: 18: Ezra 4: 3; Matt. 27: 19. These passages show beyond doubt the meaning of the words: whoever makes use of the phrase rejects the interference of another, declines association with him on the matter spoken of. Hence the words reprove, though mildly. They do more; in them Jesus warns even His mother against attempting henceforth to prescribe or suggest what He is to do. Thus understood, the words are an irresistible argument against the Mariolatry of Rome.—**Mine hour is not yet come.** In two other places in this Gospel Jesus refers to the coming of 'the hour'(12: 23; 17: 1); and three times John speaks of His hour as not yet come (7: 30; 8: 20), or as now come (13: 1). The other passages throw light on this, showing the

5 thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith
unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do
6 it. Now there were six waterpots of stone set there
after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two

peculiar solemnity which belongs to the words before us. In every instance 'the hour' is fraught with momentous issues:—'the hour' when the restraint put upon His foes shall continue no longer; when He shall pass away from the world to His Father; when He shall be glorified. So here the hour is that of the manifestation of His glory. The language used in chap. 13 : 1 and 17 : 1, together with the general teaching of the Gospel, shows that the hour is not self-chosen, but is that appointed by the Father. He came to do the will of Him that sent Him, the appointed work at the appointed time. That time none may hasten or delay by a single instant. If, then, the miracle quickly followed upon these words, which would seem to have been the case, this can present no difficulty; the Son waited for the very *moment* chosen by the Father's will.

Ver. 5. **His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.** The answer of Jesus (ver. 4) plainly implied that His hour would come. Mary, therefore, turns to the servants, and bids them be ready. The words are indefinite, and we have no right to suppose either that she now looked for miraculous help, or that she had received some private intimation of her Son's purpose. She waits for the hour: whatsoever the hour may bring, let the servants be prepared to do His bidding. Mary here retires from the scene.

Ver. 6. **And there were there six waterpots of stone, placed after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.** The waterpots were near at hand,—in the court or at the entrance to the house, not in the house itself. Considering the many washings and purifyings of the Jews, there is nothing to surprise us in the number or in the size of the waterpots. Even a small family might easily possess six, and when the number of guests was large, each of them would naturally be in use. There is much uncertainty as to the value of Hebrew measures whether of length or of capacity. Most probably the measure here mentioned was equivalent to between eight and nine of our imperial gallons. If each waterpot contained two 'firkins' and a half, the whole quantity of water would be about 130 gallons.—On the words 'of the Jews,' see the note on chap. 1: 19. Even here the phrase is not without significance. When we have set ourselves free from our prevailing habit of using this term simply as a national designation, we cannot but feel that the Evangelist is writing of that with which he has entirely broken, and is characterizing the ordinary religion of his day as one that consisted in ceremonies and external purifications.

7 or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill
the waterpots with water. And they filled them up
8 to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out
now, and bear unto the [1]ruler of the feast. And

[1] Or, *steward.*

Ver. 7. **Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water.** Probably they were now empty, perhaps in consequence of the ablutions before the feast.—**And they filled them up to the brim.** And when they are thus filled, nothing more can be done to fit them for their original design. They are able to furnish all that can be supplied for 'the purifying of the Jews.'

Ver. 8. **And he saith unto them, Draw now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast.** As the words are commonly understood, the servants are bidden to bring to the table (in smaller jars or bowls) part of the contents of the larger vessels, which were themselves too unwieldy to be moved without difficulty. If this be the meaning, we must still ask, What was it that was drawn, water or wine? Many will answer, wine, believing that the point at which the miracle is effected comes in between the seventh and eighth verses, and that all the water in the vessels was then made wine. The strong argument in favor of this interpretation is the exactness with which the number and size of the vessels are specified; and no difficulty need be found in the abundance of the supply. 'He, a King, gave as became a king' (Trench). Still there is nothing in the text that leads necessarily to this interpretation; while the language of ver. 9, 'the servants who had drawn *the water*,' distinctly suggests that what they drew was *water*, which, either as soon as drawn, or as soon as presented to the guests, became wine. But there is yet another explanation (suggested in Dr. Westcott's *Chdracteristics of the Gospel Miracles*, p. 15), having much in its favor. The Authorized Version (ver. 8) gives the command to the servants as '*Draw out now*,' etc., plainly implying that it was out of the waterpots that they were bidden to draw. But the original word is simply 'draw,' or 'draw water.' This would seem to suggest that the servants were sent again to the spring or fountain from which they had drawn the water to fill the waterpots. First, the vessels set for the purifying of the Jews are completely filled. Nothing is neglected that can be needed to prepare for all ceremonial requirements. There the water rests, and rests unchanged. Not till now is the water drawn for the thirsty guests, in bowls filled, not from vessels of purification, but at the spring itself; it is borne to the ruler of the feast, and it is wine! The decision between the last two interpretations must be left with the reader; it will probably rest less on the words of the narrative than on the view which is taken of the significance and meaning of the miracle. See below on ver. 11.—By 'the ruler of the feast' is meant either an upper servant, to whom was intrusted the duty of tasting the different

9 they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water [1] now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,
10 and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine
11 until now. This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

[1] Or, *that it had become.*

drinks and articles of food, and, in general, of superintending all the arrangements of the feast; or one of the guests acting as president of the feast, at the request of the bridegroom or by election of the guests. The latter view is favored by our knowledge of Jewish usages (comp. Ecclus. 32: 1, 2), and by the fact that the ruler is spoken of as distinct from the servants, and, as the next verse shows, was ignorant of the source from which the wine was supplied.

Vers. 9, 10. In these verses we have the testimony borne to the completeness of the miracle. The ruler of the feast, a guest speaking as the representative of the guests, calling the bridegroom (who supplied the feast, and in whose house they were), emphatically recognizes the excellence of the wine, not knowing 'whence it was.' 'From whatever source this may have come, it is wine, and good wine:' this is his witness.—'Whatever it may be, it has but now flowed from the spring as water,' is the unexpressed but implied testimony of the servants. The simplicity of the double witness gives it its force; the guests as yet know nothing of the miracle, and thus afford the strongest evidence of its truth. An attempt is sometimes made to soften down an expression used by the ruler of the feast, 'when men are drunken.' There need, however, be no scruple as to giving the word its ordinary meaning. The remark does but express his surprise at the bridegroom's departure from the ordinary custom, in bringing in so late wine of such excellence as this. The common maxim was that the best wine should be given first, when it could be appreciated by the guests; the weak and poorer when they had drunk moore than enough, and the edge of their taste was blunted. No answer is recorded,—a plain proof, were any needed, that the Evangelist values the incident not so much for its own sake as for the lesson it conveys.

Ver. 11. **This did Jesus as the beginning of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.** This, His first sign, was wrought in Galilee, where Isaiah (9: 1, 2) prophesied that Messiah's work should begin. The threefold comment of the Evangelist is of the utmost im-

## CHAPTER 2: 12-22.

### *The Transition to the Public Ministry, and the Cleansing of the Temple.*

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and

portance. This was a sign, and His first sign: in it He manifested His glory; His disciples believed in Him. 'Sign' is one of John's favorite words. Of the three words used in the New Testament to denote a miracle, the first (literally meaning 'power') is not once found in his Gospel; the second ('prodigy,' 'wonder') occurs once only (4: 48); the third, 'sign,' as many as seventeen times. The earliest use of 'sign' in connection with a miracle is in Ex. 4: 8, and the context makes the meaning very clear: the miracle was the sign of an invisible Divine Presence with Moses, and hence it attested his words. Thus also, when the manna was given, the miracle manifested the glory of the Lord (Ex. 16: 7). The miracles of Jesus, and all His works, manifested not only God's glory (8: 50), but His own: they were signs of what He is. This gives a new starting-point. Each miracle is a sign of what He is, not only in regard of the power by which it is wrought, but also by its own nature and character,—in other words, it is a symbol of His work. The words which John adds once for all are to be understood with every mention of a 'sign,' for in every miracle Jesus made manifest (removed the veil from) His glory, revealed Himself. Two other passages complete the view which John gives us of his meaning. Of the 'signs' he says himself: 'These (signs) are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name.' Of the glory he says: 'We beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a father.' First, then, this miracle attested the mission of Jesus as the Christ; the miracle established, as for Moses so for Him, the divine commission, and ratified His words. Next, it revealed His own glory as Son of God, manifesting His power, in a work as sudden and as inexplicable as a new creation; and not only His power but His grace, as He sympathizes alike with the joys and with the difficulties of life. Further, the miracle brought into light what He is in His work. The waterpots filled full for the purifying of the Jews stand as an emblem of the religion of the day, nay, even of the ordinances of the Jewish religion itself, 'carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation.' At Christ's word (on one view of the miracle) the water for purifying is changed into wine of gladness: this would point to Judaism made instinct with new life. On the other view, nothing is withdrawn from the use to which Jewish ritual applies it, but the element which could only minister to outward cleansing is transmuted by a new creative word. 'The law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' The object of all the signs (20: 31) was answered here in the disciples.

his mother, and *his* brethren, and his disciples: and there they abode not many days.

They had believed already that He was Christ, the Son of God (1: 41, 49): they now *believed in Him*,—each one 'throws himself with absolute trust upon a living Lord,' recognizing the manifestation of His glory. The miracles in this Gospel, like the parables in the other Gospels, are a test of faith. They lead onward the believer to a deeper and a firmer trust; they repel those who refuse to believe.

### *The Transition to the Public Ministry, and the Cleansing of the Temple.*— Vers. 12-22.

CONTENTS. In the passage before us we have the first section of the third great division of our Gospel. Jesus leaves the circle of His disciples, and begins His public work. This is done at Jerusalem, after a few days spent in Capernaum. In the metropolis of Israel He appears as the Son in His Father's house; and in the cleansing of the old temple and the promise of the raising up of a new one He illustrates the nature of the work He is to do. The first symptoms of opposition accordingly appear in this passage. Jesus is rejected by the theocracy of Israel, and the foundation is laid for His entering upon wider fields of labor. The subordinate parts of this section are—(1) ver. 12; (2) vers. 13-23.

Ver. 12. **After this he went down to Capernaum.** Nazareth, not Cana, would appear to be the place from which Jesus 'went down' (from the hill-country of Galilee,—comp. chap. 4: 47, 49, 51) to Capernaum, for His brethren, who are not said to have been with Him in Cana, are now of the company. All that can be said with certainty as to the position of Capernaum is, that it was situated on the western coast of the Lake of Gennesaret, not far from the northern end of the lake; whether the present Tell Hum or (less probably) Khan Minyeh be the site, we cannot here inquire (see note on Matt. 4: 13). We have here the earliest appearance of this busy and thriving Galilean town in the history of our Lord's life. The visit related in Matt. 4: 13 and Luke 4: 31 belongs to a later period than this, a period subsequent to the imprisonment of John the Baptist (see chap. 3: 22). Luke's narrative, however, (chap. 4: 23), contains an allusion to earlier miracles in Capernaum. Whether reference is made to this particular visit (which, through the nearness of the passover, was of short duration) or not, it is interesting to note that the two Evangelists agree in recording a residence of Jesus in this town earlier than that brought into prominence in Matt. 4: 13. In the Fourth Gospel Capernaum occupies a very subordinate place; the centre of the *Judean* ministry was Jerusalem.—**He, and his mother and brethren, and his disciples.** In his usual manner John divides the company into three groups, naming separately Jesus, His relations by natural kindred, His disciples. The brethren of Jesus were James, Joses (or Joseph), Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 3). In what sense they are called 'brethren' whether as the sons

13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and
14 Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the
temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves,

of Joseph and Mary, as sons of Joseph by an earlier marriage, or as sons of Mary's sister ('brother' taking the meaning of near kinsman), has been a subject of controversy from the third century to the present day. It is impossible to discuss the question within our limits, though something further must be said when we come to later chapters (chs. 7 and 19). Here we can only express a very decided conviction that the last mentioned of the three opinions is without foundation, and that the 'brethren' were sons of Joseph, their mother being either Mary herself or, more probably, an earlier wife of Joseph (comp. note on Matt. 13: 58). This verse alone might suggest that the brethren were not disciples, and from chap. 7: 5 we know they were not.

Ver. 13. **And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.** The expression, 'passover *of the Jews*,' is very remarkable, and can be explained only by the usage already noticed in ver. 6. To John's mind the nation cannot but present itself habitually as in opposition to his Master. As yet, indeed, Jesus is not confronted by an organized band of adversaries representing the ruling body of the nation; but we are on the verge of the conflict, and the conflict itself was only the outcome of ungodliness and worldliness existing before their manifestation in the persecution of Jesus. The light was come, but it was shining in darkness: this darkness rested on what had been the temple, the city, the festivals, *of the Lord*. The feast now at hand is not 'the Lord's passover' (Ex. 12: 11), but 'the passover of the Jews.' The prevailing spirit of the time has severed the feast from the sacred associations which belonged to it, so that Jesus must go up rather as Prophet than as worshipper,—not to sanction by His presence, but powerfully to protest against the degenerate worship of that day. The word of prophecy must be fulfilled: 'And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple . . . but who may abide the day of His coming?' (Mal. 3: 1, 2).

Ver. 14. **And he found in the temple-courts those that sold oxen and sheep and doves.** The scene of this traffic was the outer court, commonly spoken of as the court of the Gentiles, but known to the Jews as 'the mountain of the house.' This court (which was on a lower level than the inner courts and the house or sanctuary itself) occupied not less than two-thirds of the space inclosed by the outer walls. Along its sides ran cloisters or colonnades, two of which, 'Solomon's porch' on the east, and the 'Royal porch' on the south, were especially admired: to these cloisters many of the devout resorted for worship or instruction, and here, no doubt, our Lord often taught (chap. 10: 23). In strange contrast, however, with

15 and the changers of money sitting: and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the

the sacredness of the place was what He now 'found in the temple-courts.' At all times, and especially at the passover, the temple was frequented by numerous worshipers, who required animals that might be offered in sacrifice. The law prescribed the nature of each sacrifice, and enjoined that all animals presented to the Lord should be 'without blemish' (Lev. 22: 19, 20),—a requirement which the 'tradition of the elders' expanded into minute detail. Hence, sacrifice would have been well-nigh impossible, had not facilities been afforded for the purchase of animals that satisfied all the conditions imposed. The neighboring quarter of the city naturally became a bazaar for the purpose; but unhappily the priests, yielding to temptations of gain, had suffered such traffic to be carried on within the precincts of the temple itself. At what period this abuse took its rise we do not know. Some have supposed that the last words of Zechariah (chap. 14: 21) refer to similar practices, the verse being rendered: 'In that day there shall be no more the trafficker in the house of the Lord of hosts.' The book of Nehemiah shows examples of the spirit of disorder and irreverence from which such usages naturally spring; and the representations of Malachi make it easy to understand that the priests would be only too readily accessible to the allurements of a gainful traffic. In the court of the Gentiles, then, stood those who offered for sale oxen and sheep, —also doves (for the poor, Lev. 14: 22, and for women, Lev. 12: 6). The wording of this verse ('those that sold,' etc.) shows that the trade was now an established custom. The discordance between a cattle-mart and a place for sacred worship and converse need not be drawn out in detail. But this was not all.—**And the changers of money sitting**:—at their tables in the sacred place. The annual tribute which every man of Israel was bound to pay to the temple treasury could be paid out only in the half-shekel 'of the sanctuary' (see Matt. 17: 24-26). All who came from other lands, therefore, or who had not with them the precise coin, must resort to the exchangers, who (as we learn from the Talmud) were permitted to do their business in the temple during the three weeks preceding the passover. Their profits (at a rate of interest amounting to ten or twelve per cent.) were very great.

Ver. 15. **And making a scourge of cords, he drove them all out of the temple-courts, and the sheep and the oxen.** The scourge was made for the expulsion of the animals, but by it Jesus also declared His purpose to the traders themselves. The words show distinctly that it is with the men that He is dealing; but He drives *them* from the sacred place by banishing the instruments and means of their unholy traffic. In a figurative sense Messiah was said to come armed with a scourge. 'Rabbi Eliezer was asked by his disciples: How should a man live to escape the scourge of the Messiah?

16 changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to
them that sold the doves he said, Take these things
hence; make not my Father's house a house of mer-
17 chandise. His disciples remembered that it was
written, The zeal of thine house* shall eat me up.

* For "The zeal of thine house" read "Zeal for thy house"—*Am. Com.*

He answered: Let him live according to the law and in love towards men.'—**And poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables**—the counters on which the bankers placed their heaps of change.

Ver. 16. **And said unto them that sold the doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.** We must not suppose that the sellers of doves were more leniently dealt with. The oxen might be driven away, the tables overturned, but the cages of birds must be carried out by their owners: hence it is to these alone that Jesus directly addresses words which were really spoken to all, and which explained His action. Any zealous reformer, who understood the faith of Israel, might have done as much: indeed, the first treatise in the Talmud contains regulations for the due reverence of the temple which utterly condemn such profanations as are related here. But though the action of Jesus might imply no more, His words declare that He vindicates the honor of *His Father's* house. Thus He at once honors His Father and declares Himself. He offers Himself to Israel as the Son of God. In this deed, as in all His acts and words (comp. Matt. 13: 11-15), there is a mingling of revelation and reserve: the declaration of Sonship is combined with an act which no true Israelite could fail to approve. Those who, yielding to the impulse of right, and listening to the voice of conscience, accepted the *act*, would be led to ponder the *words;* in them would be fulfilled the promise, 'To him that hath shall more be given.' Those who hardened their heart against the act lost the revelation which was given with it, and were in danger of losing all. John does not speak of the cleansing of the temple as miraculous, but the Saviour's words themselves mark it as a 'sign:' and it is only by thinking of a divine awe attending the words (comp. chap. 18: 6) that we can explain the immediate submission of the traffickers. The following verses describe the twofold effect of the act of Jesus on the disciples and on 'the Jews.'

Ver. 17. **His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.** Clearly (from the contrast with ver. 22) they remembered this scripture *at that time.* The quotation is from Ps. 69, a psalm which is several times referred to in the New Testament. See Rom. 15: 3; 11: 9, 10; Acts 1: 20 (perhaps John 15: 25); and comp. Ps. 69: 21 with the accounts of the crucifixion. We have no record of the interpretation of this psalm by Jewish writers in a Messianic sense, but New Testament usage can

18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him,
What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou
19 doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto
them, Destroy this [1] temple, and in three days I will

[1] Or, *sanctuary*.

leave no doubt that such an application of many verses is both allowable and necessary. What was true of the devout and afflicted Israelite who wrote the words was true in the fullest sense of the Servant of Jehovah, of whom all such faithful servants were imperfect types. The exact meaning of the words here quoted will best appear if we take the whole verse: 'Zeal for thy house consumed me: and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me.' The parallelism of the lines shows that the chief antithesis lies in the pronouns. Dishonor shown to God has been felt by the psalmist as a cruel wrong to himself. 'Zealous indignation for *Thy* house, inspired by the sight or news of unworthy treatment of *Thine* house, consumed *me*,—so to say, destroyed my very life.' The quotation is not exact; what in the psalm is past is here future: 'shall eat me up.' An examination of other passages will show that, where John uses the words 'it is written,' he does not necessarily imply that the quotation is made with literal exactness. Had we the past, 'consumed,' we might be led to think of the inward consuming of holy zeal from which resulted this act of indignation; the future, 'will eat me up,' brings us nearer to what we have seen to be the meaning of the passage in the psalm. His zeal for His Father's house will devour His very life—will bring destruction in its train.

Ver. 18. **The Jews therefore answered.** The effect on the disciples has been related; what will be the response of the rulers to the self-revelation of Jesus? The word 'therefore,' answers to the Evangelist's knowledge of the fact. Their position of inward antagonism is presented to his thought, though it has not yet found expression in their deeds. **And said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us because thou doest these things?**—This answer (replying to the act rather than the words) is in the tone of indignation, not of sincere inquiry: 'Because Thou doest these things Thou art bound to show a sign, a sign that shall justify such actions.' The effectual cleansing was the 'sign,' but as such they would not receive it. Their question is a token of the failure (so far as the nation was concerned) of the manifestation which Jesus had given of Himself as Son of God. Both in the question and in the response of our Lord we have a clear parallel in the earlier Gospels: see Matt. 12: 38–40.

Ver. 19. **Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple.** The most important point for the understanding of this verse is the distinction between the two words which the English Bible renders 'temple.' The word used in vers. 14 and 15 denotes

20 raise it up. The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this [1]temple in building, and wilt thou

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[1] Or, *sanctuary.*

generally the whole area within the walls, and here especially the *outermost* space in the sacred enclosure; while the latter signifies the holy place, and the holy of holies. The sanctity of the temple-court has been vindicated; the true temple, the sanctuary, the dwelling-place of Jehovah, has not been mentioned in the narrative until now. But even this very significant change of expression would not render the meaning plain, for the words were intended to be enigmatical—to be understood after, and not before, the event which fulfilled them. If we would understand them, we must take them in connection with ver. 21, 'But He spake of the temple of His body.' To the English reader they seem merely to convey a warning that, if the Jews go on with such profanation as that which Jesus had checked, they will bring the temple to ruin. But it is of the *sanctuary* that He speaks, not of the temple-court which had sustained the desecration. When therefore He says, 'Go on in your present way, and by so doing destroy this temple,' He means that their rejection of Himself shall culminate in their consigning to destruction the temple of His body. The essence of the temple is, that it is the dwelling-place of God: His body is God's temple, for in Him 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' The material temple had been for ages the type of His body, in which God first truly manifested Himself to man. The continuance of the temple was no longer needed when the living temple was reared; but it was by the destruction of the latter that the destruction of the former was brought about,—its destruction, that is, as the dwelling-place of God. In the holiest place, behind the veil, Jehovah had dwelt: when the Lord Jesus was crucified, the veil was rent, the holy of holies was thrown open, and by being thrown open was shown to be God's habitation no longer. Our Lord therefore might well use words which relate at once to His body and to the temple, such being the connection between the two. **And in three days I will raise it up.**—His crucifixion involved the total destruction of the Jewish temple and polity. No longer will there be a special place in which God's glory will be revealed, to which God's worshippers will come,—a place in which are national distinctions, a court of the Gentiles, a court of Israel, a court of the priests. His resurrection will establish a new temple, a new order of spiritual worship. He Himself, as raised and glorified Messiah, will be the Corner-stone of a spiritual temple, holy in the Lord. This is one of the many passages in the Gospel which show to us how perfectly all the future of His history was anticipated by our Lord (see chap. 3: 14, etc). There is no real difficulty in the words, '*I* will raise it up;' chap. 10: 17, 18, furnishes a complete explanation.

Ver. 20. **The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in**

21 raise it up in three days? but he spake of the
22 [1]temple of his body. When therefore he was raised
from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake

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[1] Or, *sanctuary.*

**three days?** They answer only by another question, not an inquiry, but really an indignant and scornful rejection of His words. It was at the close of the year 20 B. C. or the beginning of 19 B. C. that Herod the Great began the rebuilding of the temple. The temple itself was completed in eighteen months; the extensive buildings round it required eight years more. So many additions, however, proved necessary before the work could be regarded as finished, that the final completion is assigned by Josephus to the year 50 A. D., seventy years after the commencement of the undertaking, and but twenty years before Jerusalem was destroyed. The 'forty and six years' bring us to the year 28 A. D. It is perhaps strange that the Jews should associate the long terms of years with the rebuilding of the sanctuary and not the temple as a whole; it is, however, very likely that, at all events, the ornamentation of this building might still be incomplete. Moreover, in their indignant rejoinder to the saying of Jesus, they not unnaturally take up the very term which He had used, even though it applied in strictness only to the most sacred portion of the structure.

Ver. 21. See above on ver. 19.

Ver. 22. **When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this.** Again (as in ver. 10) we are struck by the suddenness with which the narrative breaks off. It has been related mainly to bring out the rejection of Jesus by the Jews; the Evangelist pauses upon it only for a moment to speak of the effect on the disciples, as after the former miracle he records that the 'disciples believed in' Jesus (ver. 11). We do not find the same statement here, but are told (comp. chap. 12: 16) that the words which baffled the Jews were mysterious to the disciples likewise. Whilst, however, the Jews rejected the 'hard saying,' the disciples 'kept all these things and pondered them in their 'hearts,' not understanding them until the prophecy was fulfilled. This record of words not understood at the time, even by the inner circle of the followers of Jesus, is a striking indication of the simple truthfulness of the narration (comp. ver. 11).—**And they believed the Scriptures and the word which Jesus had said.**—The recollction of the words after the resurrection led the disciples (we cannot doubt that John is speaking chiefly of his own experience) to a fuller and richer faith in 'the scripture' and 'word' of Jesus. The 'word' must be that of ver. 19; but it is not so easy to explain 'scripture.' It cannot mean the Old Testament as a whole, for in this sense John always uses the plural, 'the Scriptures.' It would be easier to suppose that the Evangelist has in mind some passages of the Old Testament predictive of the resurrection (*e. g.*, from Ps. 16; Isa. 53; Hos. 6), or the rebuildthis; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

ing of the temple (Zech. 6: 12-15). If however, we include several passages, the difficulty in the use of the singular remains as before; and if we seek for a single prediction, we cannot meet with any one that agrees so closely with our Lord's saying as to be thus definitely pointed out as 'the scripture.' We seem bound to refer the word to the only 'scripture' that (ver. 17) has been quoted in the context, Ps. 69: 9. This verse speaking of the consuming and of its cause, formed the groundwork of the first part of our Lord's saying ('Destroy this temple'). Hence this passage of the psalm and 'the word which Jesus had said' form one whole, and as such are mentioned here. The disciples, guided to deeper faith by that which was at the time wholly mysterious (and which was a 'stone of stumbling' to those who believed not), recognizing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and of the prediction of Jesus Himself in the death and resurrection of their Lord. Thus in the first scene of His public ministry, we have Jesus before us in the light in which the whole Gospel is to present Him, at once the crucified and the risen Lord. The whole narrative has been subjected to keen scrutiny both by friends and foes, but its importance has hardly yet been properly acknowledged. A few words must still be said as to its relation to the other Gospels, and as to its place in this. Each of the earlier Gospels records a cleansing of the temple, accomplished, however, not at the outset but at the close of our Lord's public ministry, on the Monday (probably) preceding the crucifixion. To some it has seemed altogether improbable that there should have been two acts of precisely similar character at the extreme points of the official life of our Lord. But is the character of the two the same? We would not lay too much stress on some of the differences of detail, for apparent divergences sometimes present themselves in connection with narratives which no one would be inclined to explain as relating to different events. There are, however, not a few touches in the account before us which show the hand of an eye-witness; such as the making of the scourge of cords, the scattering of the money of exchange, the words addressed to the sellers of doves alone, the form of the rebuke, the conversation with the Jews, the incidental notice of the forty-six years (a statement which only elaborate calculation shows to be in harmony with independent statements of another Evangelist). Finally, there is the remarkable perversion before Caiaphas of the words regarding the rebuilding of the temple, on which nothing contained in the earlier Gospels throws any light, and which (especially as given in Mark 14: 58) bears all the marks of having been exaggerated in the popular mind through lapse of time. Such considerations as these seem to show that, if the cleansing can have occurred once only, its place in the history is that assigned by John. But is it really at all improbable that two cleansings should have taken place, separated by such an

## CHAPTER 2: 23—3: 21.

### *The Conversation with Nicodemus.*

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, behold-

interval of time as the Gospel narrative presupposes? No one will think that the action of our Lord, as here related, would put an end to the traffic, when this very narrative brings before us an official challenge of His authority so to act. At the last Passover Jesus would find the temple-court as much the scene of worldly trading as it was at the first. Did He then, it will be asked, condone the evil when in intervening years He went up to the same feast? This question must be met by another: Have we reason to believe that Jesus attended any other Passover than these two? The feast of chap. 5: 1 was in all probability not a Passover, and at the Passover mentioned in 6: 4 He certainly was not present. If then he attended two Passovers only, is it at all improbable that on the second occasion, as on the first, He would vindicate the purity and sanctity of the temple? The purpose, too, of the two cleansings is different. At the close of His ministry He is hailed as King of Israel, and He indignantly expels from God's house those who practically denied to Gentiles any share in that place of prayer. Now He acts as the Son of God, offering Himself in this character to rulers and to people, that they may acknowledge His Sonship and obey His word. 'He came unto His own home,' His home as Son, 'and they that were His own received Him not.' This is the turning-point of His ministry: henceforth He is the rejected of the Jews. This is the significance of the narrative before us. The cleansing and the mysterious words spoken by Jesus (ver. 19) are alike 'signs.' The first was a sign of His Sonship, a sign which they refused to accept. That refused, He gives the second; just as, when the Pharisees asked of Him a sign from heaven, He refused to give any save the sign of the prophet Jonah. If they will not listen to the former, the latter alone remains. He would have renewed the life of the temple, but they would not have it so. Let them, then, go on in their ways, and destroy the temple; let them go on in their rejection of Him, and destroy His life. The result will be the raising of the spiritual temple which shall be none of theirs—a temple in which God Himself shall dwell, manifested to all men in the Son.

### *The Conversation with Nicodemus.*—Chap. II. 23—III. 21.

CONTENTS.—It is of much importance to keep the closing verses of chap. 2 in close connection with the opening verses of chap. 3 (see the commentary on 3: 1). Rejected by the theocracy of Israel, Jesus turns to individuals, but these are not confined to Israel. The woman of Samaria and the king's officer of Galilee are beyond the theocratic pale. Nicodemus, however, who is first introduced to us, does belong to the chosen people; and the conversation of Jesus with him, as it leads him from an imperfect to a perfect faith, illustrates the power which Jesus, though rejected by Israel and doomed to die, shall exercise over the hearts of men. The subordinate parts of this section are—(1) 2: 23-35; (2) 3: 1-15; (3) 3: 16-21.

24 ing his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust
25 himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and
because he needed not that any one should bear witness
concerning [1]man; for he himself knew what was in man.

[1] Or, *a man; for.... the man.*

[One of the richest sections of the N. T.: the infinite love of God to the whole world (16), the mission of Christ, the kingdom of God, regeneration by his Spirit, eternal life: these grand truths are set forth in this interview with a timid, yet earnest enquirer from the highest ranks of Jewish society. The first sign of Christ in Galilee was a miracle of transformation; his first public act in Jerusalem an act of reformation, his first discourse a discourse on regeneration. This is the central idea and one of the three fundamental ideas of Christianity: incarnation—atonement—regeneration. The new birth from heaven by a creative act of the Holy Spirit is, like the natural birth, a mystery as to its origin and mode, but a mystery *manifest* in its effects to all who have spiritual eyes to see, and meets us in every true Christian who is as certain of his higher life as he is of his natural life. The results of this conversation with Nicodemus appear in 7: 50 and 19: 39 and are repeated ever since in the experience of all attentive readers and hearers.—P. S.]

Ver. 23. **Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, at the feast, many believed in his name, beholding his signs which he did.** In this verse we pass from the public presentation of Jesus to the people and 'the Jews' in the House of His Father to His more private ministry in Jerusalem: rejected as the Son of God, He continues His work as a Prophet, doing many 'signs,' and by these leading many to faith in His mission. The time spoken of is still the season of the Passover. The remarkable repetition, 'at the Passover, at the feast,' may probably be intended to direct our thoughts especially to the very night of the paschal supper. If so, the purification of the temple may have fallen at the very time when every Israelite sought to purify himself and his house for the great festival that was now approaching. The words would also point to our Lord's observing the feast Himself. It is noticeable that we do not here read 'the Passover of the Jews:' the desecration of the festival has been condemned in one of its manifestations, but the festival itself is honored.

Vers. 24, 25. **But Jesus did not trust himself unto them on account of his discerning all men, and because he needed not that any should bear witness concerning a man; for he himself discerned what was in the man.** The effect produced upon Jesus Himself by this imperfection of faith is described in very remarkable language. Many 'believed in His name,' and so took the first step towards that surrender of the heart to Him which in ver. 11 we read of as made by His disciples. Had they thus fully trusted themselves to Him, then would He have trusted Himself to them. This is one of the illustrations of the teaching, so characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, with regard to the union and communion of Jesus with His people; if they abide in Him, He abides in them. That these believers have not reached such maturity of faith Jesus Himself discerns. No witness by another is needed by Him, for

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named

the thoughts of every man with whom He speaks are 'naked and opened' unto Him. The words of John do not in their literal sense go beyond this; but, in declaring that Jesus read the heart of all who came to Him, they imply that other truth with which the rendering in our Bibles has made us familiar: 'He knew what was in man.'

Ver. 1. **And there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,** That this verse does not begin a new section is clearly shown by the first word 'And,' which links it with the last chapter; another indication of the same kind is seen when the true reading is restored in ver. 2 ('to Him' for 'to Jesus'). A closer examination will show that the connection thus suggested is really very close and important. In chap. 2: 24, 25, a very marked emphasis is laid on 'man;' the same word and thought are taken up in this verse. Ver. 2 of this chapter brings before us a belief agreeing in nature and ground with that spoken of in chap. 2: 23, 24. The last thought of chap. 2 is powerfully illustrated by the answers which Jesus returns to the *thoughts* of Nicodemus. Clearly, then, John means us to understand that out of the many who 'believed in the name' of Jesus was one deserving of special attention, not merely as representing a higher class and special culture, but chiefly because, brought by the signs to a degree of faith, he was desirous of knowing more; and our Lord's dealings with Nicodemus show how He sought to lead all who were so prepared to a deeper knowledge and higher faith. The name Nicodemus is found in the Talmud, as a Hebrew surname borne by a Jew, a disciple of Jesus, whose true name was Bonai. There is nothing to show that the persons are identical, and on the whole it is more probable that they are not. It is most natural to regard the name Nicodemus as Greek, not Hebrew; compare 'Philip' (chap. 1: 43). Nicodemus is described as a Pharisee (see notes on chaps. 1: 24; 7: 32), and as 'a ruler of the Jews,'—*i. e.*, a member of the Sanhedrin (comp. chap. 7: 50), the great council of seventy-one which held supreme power over the whole nation. In other passages John uses 'ruler' in this sense (see 7: 26, 48; 12: 42); here only does he join with it the words 'of the Jews.' The added words (see chap. 1: 19) show that Nicodemus stood connected with that body which was ever present to John's thought as the assemblage of those who represented the self-seeking and formalism which Jesus came to subvert. The elements of hostility already existed, though the open conflict had not yet begun (see chap. 2: 18). It is not easy always to define the relation between 'the Pharisees' and 'the Jews,' as the two terms are used by John; for under the latter designation the leaders of the Pharisees would certainly be included. The former perhaps usually brings into prominence teaching and principles; the latter points rather to external action. The Pharisees took alarm at the new *doctrine*, the Jews resented the new *authority*. Nicodemus is not free from the externalism and prejudices of his class, but his can-

2 Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with

dour and his faith stand out in wonderful contrast to the general spirit evinced by the Pharisees and the Jews.

Ver. 2. **The same came to him by night.** Chap. 19: 38, 39, seems clearly to show that the motive of Nicodemus in thus coming by night was the same as the cause of Joseph's secret discipleship—the 'fear of the Jews.' That he himself was one of 'the Jews' only makes this explanation more probable. We cannot doubt that he came alone; whether Jesus also was alone, or whether John or other disciples were present at the interview, we cannot tell.—**And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art come from God a teacher.** Every word here is of importance. On Rabbi see the note, chap. 1: 38. We may be sure that a member of the sect that carefully scrutinized the Baptist's credentials (chap. 1: 19–24) would not lightly address Jesus by this title of honor, or acknowledge Him as a Teacher. But the words 'Thou art come from God' will appear even more significant, if we keep in mind that the most familiar designation of the Messiah was 'the coming One,' 'He that should come.' The appearing of the Baptist quickened in the minds of 'all men' (Luke 3: 15) the recollection of God's great promise; and the signs lately wrought by Jesus in Jerusalem may well have excited in the mind of the Pharisee hopes which find a hesitating expression in his words. No ordinary prophet would have been thus acknowledged as one 'come from God.' At the very least, the confession assigns to Jesus a supreme authority as Teacher. The confession of Nicodemus was made in the name of others besides himself. 'We know;'—others amongst the Pharisees, perhaps already others amongst the rulers (chap. 12: 42), had reached the same point. No doubt the number was but small, too small to make confession easy, or to banish the very natural fear of the Jews which brought Nicodemus to Jesus by night.—**For no one can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him.** Nicodemus acknowledges the works to be 'signs' (not so the Jews, chap. 2: 18), and he shows that in him the signs had precisely answered the designed end. The faith indeed which rested on these alone was imperfect, but it was faith; more could be gained; the faith could be educated, raised higher, and made more complete. How truly this faith has been educated will be shown when (chap. 19: 39) it shall come forth in honor of that *crucified* Redeemer who is here to be proclaimed (ver. 14). Such education, however, can be effected only by the word of Jesus, leading to fellowship with Himself. For this word Nicodemus now comes. In reading the following verses we must bear in mind that, as Jesus would train and strengthen the faith of Nicodemus, it is the weak side of this faith that is kept in view;

3 him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born [1]anew,

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[1] Or, *from above.*

but the Saviour's acceptance of the faith as real is plainly to be seen in the openness and unreservedness of the teaching He vouchsafes. Many have pointed out the contrast between this discourse and those related in the other Gospels; but had there been no difference between discourses delivered to the half-instructed excitable multitudes of Galilee and those intended for a 'teacher of Israel,' the apparent agreement would have been a discord which no argument could explain away (see Introduction).

Ver. 3. **Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except any one have been born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** Jesus answers his thoughts rather than his words, but the connection between the address and the answer is not hard to find. John the Baptist had familiarized all with the thought that the kingdom of God was at hand, that the reign of the Messiah, so long expected, would soon begin. Whatever meaning may be assigned to the words of ver. 2, we may certainly say that every thoughtful Jew who believed what Nicodemus believed was 'waiting for the kingdom of God.' But the Pharisee's conception of the Messianic promise was false. In great measure, at least, his 'kingdom of God' was outward and carnal, not inward and spiritual,—a privilege of birth, belonging of right to Israel. This false conception Jesus would at once correct, and the gravity of the error is reflected in the solemnity of the language, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee.'—'Any one.' This more literal rendering is necessary here because of the next verse. Our Lord says simply *any one.* Nicodemus brings in the word 'man' to give more expressiveness to his reply. 'Have been born anew.' It has been, and still is, a much controverted question whether the Greek word here used should be rendered *again*, or *anew*, or *from above.* 'Again' is certainly inadequate; for, though the word may denote *beginning over again*, *commencing the action afresh*, it cannot express mere repetition. Much may be said in favor of the third rendering 'from above.' This is the undoubted meaning of the same word as used below (ver. 31); and a similar idea is expressed in the passages of the Gospel (chap. 1: 13) and First Epistle of John (chap. 2: 29, 5: 1, etc.) which speak of those who are begotten of God. It may also be urged that, as Christ is 'He that cometh from above' (ver. 31), those who through faith are one with Christ must derive their being from the same source, and may well be spoken of as 'born from above.' Notwithstanding these arguments, it is probable that *anew* is the true rendering. Had the other thought been intended, we might surely have expected 'of God' instead of 'from above.' The correspondence between the two members of the sentence would then have been complete; only those who have been *born of God* can see the

4 he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith
unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?
can he enter a second time into his mother's womb,
5 and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say

*kingdom of God.* Further, *born* (or *begotten*) *of God* is a very easy and natural expression, but this can hardly be said of *born* (or *begotten*) *from above:* 'coming from above' is perfectly clear; 'born from above' is not so. The chief argument, however, is afforded by the next verse, which clearly shows that Nicodemus understood a second birth to be intended. But the words 'except any one have been born from above' would not necessarily imply a second birth. The Jews maintained that they were born of God (see chap. 8: 41), and would have had no difficulty whatever in believing that those only who received their being from above could inherit the blessings of Messiah's kingdom. Our Lord's words, then, teach the fundamental truth, that not natural birth, descent from the stock of Israel, but a second birth, the being begotten anew, a complete spiritual change (see ver. 5), admits into the kingdom of God. On the general expectation of a king and a kingdom, see chap. 1: 49. It is remarkable that the kingdom of God is expressly mentioned by John in this chapter only (compare, however, chap. 18: 36).—'Cannot' is by no means the same as 'shall not.' It expresses an impossibility in the very nature of things. To a state of outward earthly privilege, rights of natural birth might give admittance. In declaring that without a complete inward change none can possibly see (have a true perception of) 'the kingdom of God,' Jesus declares the spiritual character of His kingdom. In it none but the spiritual can have any part.

Ver. 4. **Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?** These are the words of a man amazed beyond measure. Jesus has read his thoughts, and the answer to his unspoken question has come with the suddenness and surprise of a thunderbolt. The solemn emphasis laid on the words 'born anew' forbids his thinking of a mere figure of speech, and apparently banishes from his mind the Old Testament expressions which approach the same truth (see ver. 5). The privilege which he attached to natural birth within the bounds of Israel is torn away by a word; the 'any one' of our Lord's answer makes all men equal; and the prize which seemed almost within his grasp is given to every one who has been born anew. In his bewilderment he sees no meaning in the words of Jesus, except they be understood physically of a second natural birth; and the evident impossibility of this he expresses in the very strongest terms.

Ver. 5. **Jesus answered. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except any one have been born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** The answer is a unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

stronger affirmation of the same truth, with some changes of expression which made the words no easier of acceptance, save as the new terms might awaken echoes of Old Testament language, and lead the hearer from the external to an inward and spiritual interpretation. The first words have given rise to warm and continued controversy. Many have held that the birth 'of water and spirit' can only refer to Christian baptism; others have denied that Christian baptism is alluded to at all. The subject is very important and very difficult. Our only safety lies in making the Evangelist his own interpreter. We shall repeatedly find, when a difficulty occurs, that some word of his own in the context or in some parallel passage brings us light. (1) First, then, as to the very peculiar expression 'of water and spirit.' We cannot doubt that this is the true rendering; no direct reference is made as yet to the personal Holy Spirit. The words 'water and spirit' are most closely joined, and placed under the government of the same preposition. A little earlier in the Gospel (chap. 1 : 33) we find the same words—not, indeed, joined together as here, but yet placed in exact parallelism, each word, too, receiving emphasis from the context. Three times between chap. 1 : 19 and chap. 1 : 33 John speaks of his baptism with water; twice there is a reference to the Spirit (1 : 32, 33); and in ver. 33 John's baptizing with water and our Lord's baptizing with 'holy spirit' (see the note) stand explicitly contrasted. It is very possible that this testimony was well known to others besides John's disciples, to all indeed in Judæa who were roused to inquiry respecting the Baptist and his relation to Jesus. (2) It is possible that the Jews of that age may have been familiar with the figure of a new birth in connection with baptism. It is confessedly difficult accurately to ascertain Jewish usages and modes of thought in the time of our Lord. The Talmud indeed contains copious stores of information, but it is not easy to distinguish between what belongs to an earlier and what to a later age. We know that converts to the Jewish religion were admitted by baptism to fellowship with the sacred people. The whole tenor of the law would suggest such a washing when the uncleanness of heathenism was put off, and hence no rite could be more natural. Yet we have no certain knowledge that this was practiced so early as the time of our Lord. There is no doubt that, at a later date, the proselyte thus washed or baptized was spoken of as born again. Here again, therefore, we have some confirmation of the view that in the words before us there is *in some sort* a reference to baptism,—at all events, to the baptism of John. (3) But what was John's baptism? We see from chap. 1 : 25 how peculiar his action appeared to the rulers of the people. Even if proselytes were in that age baptized, a baptism that invited *all*, publican and Pharisee alike, would but seem the more strange. John's action was new and startling; and from chap. 1 : 21–25 it appears that the leaders of Jewish thought be-

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that

held in it an immediate reference to the time of Messiah. It seems very probable that John's baptism was directly symbolic, a translation into visible symbol of such promises as Ezek. 36: 25, which looked forward to the new spiritual order of which he was the herald. To the sprinkling with clean water, the cleansing from all filthiness, of which Ezekiel speaks, answers closely John's 'baptism of repentance for the remission of sins' (compare also Ezek. 36: 31). To the promise which follows, 'A new spirit will I put within you. . . . I will put my spirit within you,' answers just as closely John's testimony to Jesus, 'He it is that baptizeth with holy spirit.' (4) The two contrasted elements in the baptisms of chap. 1: 33 are (*a*) the covering and removal of past sin; and (*b*) the inbreathing of a new life. In that verse 'holy spirit' is the gift and not the Giver. The Giver is the Holy Spirit; but the gift, that which is the essential element in the new baptism, is the bestowal of 'holy spirit,' the seed and the principle of a holy spiritual life. (5) These two elements were conjoined in the Christian baptism instituted afterwards: the cleansing of forgiveness through Christ's death and the holiness of the new life in Christ are alike symbolized in it. Here, therefore, our Lord says that no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless he have been born anew, the elements of the new birth being the removal by cleansing of the old sinful life, and the impartation by the Holy Spirit of a new holy principle of life.—If this view of the words is correct, there is error in both extremes of which mention has been made. There is no *direct* reference here to Christian baptism; but the reference to the truths which that baptism expresses is distinct and clear.

Ver. 6. **That which hath been born of the flesh is flesh; and that which hath been born of the Spirit is spirit.** In the last verse was implied the law that like is produced from like, since the pure and spiritual members of God's kingdom must be born of water and spirit. Here this law is expressly stated. Flesh produces flesh. Spirit produces spirit. Thus the necessity of a new birth is enforced, and the 'cannot' of ver. 3 explained. It is not easy to say whether 'flesh,' as here used, definitely indicates the sinful principles of human nature, or only that which is outward, material, not spiritual but merely natural. The latter seems more likely, both from the context (where the contrast is between the natural and the spiritual birth) and from John's usage elsewhere. Though the word occurs as many as thirteen times in this Gospel (chap. 1: 13; 14, 6: 51, 52, etc., 8: 15; 17: 2), in no passage does it express the thought of sinfulness, as it does in Paul's Epistles and in 1 John 2: 16. Another difficulty meets us in the second clause. Are we to read 'born of the Spirit' or 'of the spirit?' Is the reference to the Holy Spirit Himself, who imparts the principle of the new life, or to the principle which He imparts,—the principle just spoken of in ver. 5, 'of water *and spirit?*' It is hard to say, and the difference in meaning is ex-

7 which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not
8 that I said unto thee, Ye must be born [1]anew. [2]The
wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

[1] Or, *from above.* [2] Or, *The Spirit breatheth.*

tremely small; but when we consider the analogy of the two clauses, the latter seems more likely. There is no reference here to 'water;' but, as we have seen, the water has reference to the past alone,—the state which gives place to the new life. To speak of this would be beside the point of the verse now before us, which teaches that the spiritual life of the kingdom of God can only come from the new spiritual principle.

Ver. 7. **Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.** Nicodemus had no doubt shown by look or exclamation his astonishment at hearing such words, containing so strange a view of the kingdom of God and the conditions on which it could be entered. The use of 'marvel' in other passages would seem to show that in this Gospel the word indicates much more than amazement. It is certainly not the astonishment of admiration, but incredulous and sometimes angry surprise. Our Lord's teaching had set at nought the accepted teaching of Israel, thoughts and hopes to which Nicodemus had long and firmly clung, and his heart rebels. Our Lord, according to His wont, does but the more emphatically affirm the truth at which Nicodemus stumbled. 'Ye must be born again:' the necessity is absolute. Before, He had spoken of 'any one,' leaving the application to His hearer; now, as Nicodemus had said 'We know,' Jesus says 'Ye must,'—even ye who possess the treasures of Israel's learning, and whom the signs are guiding to the King of Israel, 'ye must be born again:' 'Marvel not at this.'

Ver. 8. The words of this verse point out to Nicodemus *why* he must not thus 'marvel' at the new teaching,—must not cast it away with incredulous surprise. Nature itself may teach him. In nature there is an agent whose working is experienced and acknowledged by all, while at the same time it is full of mystery; yet the mystery makes no man doubt the reality of the working.—**The wind breatheth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.** From the beginning the wind seems to have been the divinely-intended witness and emblem in the natural world of the Spirit of God. Ever present it bore a constant witness. A commentator (Tholuck) has conjectured that, whilst Jesus spoke, there was heard the sound of the wind as it swept through the narrow street of the city, thus furnishing an occasion for the comparison here. It may well have been so; every reader of the Gospels may see how willingly our Lord drew lessons from natural objects around Him. Such a conjecture might help to explain the abruptness with which the meaning of the word is changed, the very same word which in vers. 5 and 6 was rendered

voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and
whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the
9 Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him,

*spirit* being now used in the sense of wind. Nothing but the abruptness of this transition needs any explanation. The appointed emblem teaches the lesson for which it was appointed. The choice of terms (*breatheth, listeth, voice*) shows that the wind is personified. It is perhaps of the gentle breeze rather than of the violent blast that the words speak (for the word *pneuma* is used with much more latitude in the Greek Bible than in classical Greek); in the *breath* of wind there is even more mystery than in the *blast.* Thou hearest its voice, it is present though invisible; thou feelest its power, for thou art in its course; but where the course begins, what produces the breath,—whither the course is tending, what is the object of the breath,—thou knowest not. Nicodemus, unable to question this, would remember Old Testament words which spoke of man's not knowing 'the way of the wind' as illustrating man's ignorance of the Creator's works. (Eccles. 11 : 5).—**So is every one that hath been born of the Spirit.** As in the natural, so it is in the spiritual world. The wind breatheth where it listeth; the Spirit breatheth where He will. Thou hearest the sound of the wind, but canst not fix the limits of its course, experiencing only that thou thyself art in that course: every one that hath been born of the Spirit knows that His influence is real, experiencing that influence in himself, but can trace His working no farther,—knows not the beginning or the end of His course. Our Lord does not speak of the birth itself, but of the resulting state. The birth itself belongs to a region beyond the outward and the sensible, just as none can tell whence the breath of wind has come. Many take the first part of the verse as having reference to the Spirit, not the wind: 'The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth; so is every one that hath been born of the Spirit.' The chief arguments in favor of this translation are the following:—(1) It does not involve a sudden transition from one meaning to another of the same Greek word. (2) On the ordinary view there is some confusion in the comparison: the words are not, 'The wind breatheth where . . . so is the Spirit;' but, 'The wind breatheth where . . . *so is every one that hath been born of the Spirit.*' These two arguments have substantially been dealt with above. The language is condensed, it is true, and the words corresponding to the first clause are not directly expressed, but have to be supplied in thought. The chief comparison, however, is between the 'thou' of the first clause and the 'every one' of the second, as we have already seen. On the other hand, the difficulties presented by the new translation are serious, but we cannot here follow them in detail.

Ver. 9. **Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things come to pass?** The tone of this answer is very

10 How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and under-

different from that of verse 4. Here, as there, the question is. *How can . .* ? But there the added words show that the meaning is, 'It is impossible' (comp. Luke 1 : 18); whereas in this verse the chief stress lies on the first word 'How' (comp. Luke 1 : 34). The offended astonishment of Nicodemus (ver. 7) has yielded to the words of Jesus. He now understands that Jesus really means that there is such a thing as a new spiritual birth, in contrast with that natural birth which had ever seemed to him the only necessary condition of entrance into the kingdom of Messiah. Still, as ver. 12 shows, the victory over unbelief is not yet complete.

Ver. 10. **Jesus answered and said unto him, Thou art the teacher of Israel; and perceivest not these things?** The question which expressed the bewilderment of Nicodemus is answered by another question. He has assumed the office of teacher, teacher of God's people Israel, and yet he does not recognize these truths. 'Israel' is a word used only four times in this Gospel, and never without special meaning. We have seen its significance in 1 : 31 and 49; and chap. 12: 13 is similar The only remaining passage is that before us. No word so clearly brings into view the nation of God's special choice. The name carries us back from a time of degeneracy and decadence to past days of hope and promise. It was to Israel that God showed His statutes and His judgments (Ps. 147 : 19), and this thought is very prominent here. Of Israel thus possessed of the very truths to which Jesus had made reference (see above, on ver. 5) Nicodemus is 'the teacher.' It is not simply 'a teacher,' though it is not very easy to say what the presence of the article denotes. It is possible that Nicodemus occupied a superior position, or was held in especial honor amongst the doctors of the law; or the words may merely imply that he magnified his office and was proud to be teacher of God's people. Surely from him might have been expected such knowledge of the Scriptures and insight into their meaning that the truth of the words just spoken by Jesus would at once be recognised. For our Lord does not say 'and *knowest* not;' Nicodemus is not blamed for any want of *previous* knowledge of these things, but because he does not perceive the truth of the teaching when presented to him,—and presented, moreover, by One whose right to teach with authority he had himself confessed. It will be observed that Jesus does not answer the 'How' of the preceding question; that had been answered by anticipation. In ver. 8 Jesus had declared that the *manner* must be a mystery to man, whereas the *fact* was beyond all doubt. The fact was known to every one that had been born of the Spirit, but to such only. Hence in the following verse we have a renewed and more emphatic affirmation of the truth and certainty of what has been said. If Nicodemus would really know the fact, it must be by the knowledge of experience,—He appears no further in this narra-

11 standest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto
thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of
that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
12 If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how

tive. The last words have reduced him to silence,—thoughtful silence, we cannot doubt,—but have not brought him to complete belief.

Ver. 11. **Verily, verily, I say unto thee.** These words form the solemn introduction to a new division, a higher stage, of the discourse. The connecting link between vers. 10 and 11 is reproof. The last verse laid stress on the knowledge which should have prepared the teacher of Israel for the reception of the word of Jesus; in this the emphasis lies on the dignity of the Teacher whose word he had been so slow to receive. **We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen.** The sudden transition to the plural 'we know' is remarkable. We cannot suppose that our Lord here joins with Himself the prophets of the Old Covenant, or John the Baptist, or that He is speaking of the testimony of the Father and the Holy Spirit. The key to the plural is found in ver. 8. Every one who dwells in the spiritual world of which Jesus has been speaking is a witness to its reality and its wonders. Here then Jesus associates with Himself in this emphatic testimony all who have been born of the Spirit. The change of expression is peculiarly appropriate, since He is about to pass away from the direct address to Nicodemus himself, and to speak through him to the class to which he belonged. Nicodemus had at first said 'we know' (ver. 2), as representative of others like-minded with himself, who by the signs had been led to faith in the name of Jesus, but were ignorant of His spiritual work. Jesus now contrasts with these another class, consisting of all who from their own experience could join Him in His testimony to the reality of the spiritual kingdom. The words of Jesus in chap. 9: 4 are equally remarkable in their association of His people with Himself.—The two parallel members of this verse bring the truth expressed into bold relief. The words closely correspond (*knowing* to *speaking*, *seeing* to *bearing witness*), while there is at the same time an advance in the thought, since *bearing witness* rises above *speaking*, and *we have seen* is more expressive than *we know*. In ver. 8, where the wind was taken as the emblem of the Spirit, the sense which bore witness was that of hearing. This verse speaks of something more convincing still, the sense of sight. **And ye receive not our witness.** To such sayings of his Master we may trace the mournful reflections which are again and again made by the Evangelist (see 1: 11, 3: 32, 12: 37). Though the reference is to a class ('ye receive'), yet the words seem to imply that some unbelief still lingered in the heart of Nicodemus himself.

Ver. 12. **If I told you the earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you the heavenly**

**things?** Here our Lord returns to the singular, 'I told;' for He is not now speaking of the witness of experience, but of instruction which He Himself had personally given. It seems hardly possible, however, that our Lord simply refers to words just spoken. In saying 'If I told you the earthly things, and ye believe not,' He plainly refers to unbelief *after instruction*,—unbelief which instruction failed to remove. But if Nicodemus came alone (and there is no doubt that he did), he alone had received this last instruction. Others might be described as unbelievers, but not as *remaining in unbelief after* having heard the teaching concerning the new birth. We are compelled, therefore, to suppose that our Lord spoke generally of previous discourses to the Jews, and not specifically of these His latest words. But what are the earthly and the heavenly things? Many answers have been given which are little more than arbitrary conjectures. Again the Evangelist must be his own interpreter. As in the next verse 'heaven' is not used figuratively, it cannot be maintained that 'heavenly' is figurative here. The words 'earthly' and 'heavenly' must have their simple meaning, 'what is upon earth,' 'what is in heaven.' The things that are in heaven can only be made known by Him who has been in heaven; this is suggested by the connection between this verse and the next. When we come to the last section of the chapter, we shall find that it contains (in some degree) a comment upon these verses. Now there (in ver. 32) we read of Him 'that cometh out of heaven, who 'bears witness of what He has seen and heard,'—who being sent from God 'speaketh the words of God' (ver. 34). But this same comment takes note of the converse also. Contrasted with Him who comes from heaven is 'he that is out of the earth' and 'speaketh out of the earth' (ver. 31). Combining these explanatory words, we may surely say that 'the heavenly things' are those truths which he who cometh from heaven, and He alone, can reveal, which are the words of God revealing His counsels by the Divine Son now come. The things on earth, in like manner, are the truths whose home is earth, so to speak, which were known before God revealed Himself by Him who is in the bosom of the Father (chap. 1: 18). They are 'earthly,' not as belonging to the world of sin or the world of sense, but as being things which the prophet or teacher who has never ascended into heaven, but whose origin and home are the earth, can reach, though not necessarily by his own unaided powers. In His former discourses to the Jews, Jesus would seem not to have gone beyond the circle of truth already revealed. Even in His words to Nicodemus He mainly dwells on that which the Scriptures of the Old Testament had taught; and He reproves the teacher of Israel who did not at once recognize His words, thus founded on the Old Testament, as truth. The kingdom of God, the necessity of repentance and faith, the new heart, the holy life, the need at once of cleansing and of quickening—these and other truths, once indeed inhabitants of heaven, had long been naturalized on earth. Having been revealed, they belong to men, whereas the secret

13 shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that de-

things belong unto the Lord (Deut. 29: 29). Those of whom our Lord spoke had yielded a partial belief, but the 'believing' of which He here speaks is a perfect faith. Nicodemus was a believer, and yet not a believer. If some of the truths hitherto declared had been so imperfectly received, though those who were mighty in the Scriptures ought to have recognized them as already taught, almost as part of the law that was given through Moses (chap. 1: 17), how would it be when He spoke of the things hitherto secret, coming directly out of the heaven which He opens (comp. chap. 1: 51), and for the first time revealed in Him,—part of the 'truth' that 'came through Jesus Christ?' (chap. 1: 17).—It will be seen, then, that the truth of ver. 5 would seem to be placed by Jesus rather amongst the 'earthly' than amongst the 'heavenly' things. Of some of the heavenly things He proceeds to speak (vers. 14, 15).

Ver. 13. **And no one hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down out of heaven, the Son of man.** The connection is this: 'How will ye believe if I tell you the heavenly things? And it is from me alone that ye can learn them. No one can tell the heavenly things unless he has been in heaven, and no one has been in heaven and come down to earth save myself.' Repeatedly does our Lord in this Gospel speak of His coming down out of heaven (6: 33, 38, etc.), using the very word that we meet with here; and hence it is impossible to give the phrase a merely figurative sense. He came forth from the Father, and came into the world (16: 28) that He might declare the Father (chap. 1: 18) and speak unto the world what He had heard from Him (chap. 8: 26). But this requires that we take the other verb 'hath ascended up' in its literal sense, and then the words seem to imply that Jesus had already ascended into heaven. '*Hath ascended up*' cannot refer to His future ascension; and there is no foundation for the view held by some, that within the limits of His ministry on earth He was ever literally taken up into heaven. What, then, is the meaning? There are several passages in which the words 'save' or 'except' present the same difficulty. One of the most familiar is Luke 4: 27, where it seems at first strange to read, 'Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian,'—no leper of Israel cleansed except a leper who was not of Israel! The mind is so fixed on the lepers and their cleansing, that the other words 'of them' are not carried on in thought to the last clause: 'none of them was cleansed.'—indeed, no leper was cleansed save 'Naaman the Syrian.' So also in the preceding verse (Luke 6: 26). In other passages (such as Gal. 2: 16; Rev. 21: 27) the same peculiarity exists, but it is not apparent in the Authorized Version. The verse before us is exactly similar. The special thought is not the having gone up into heaven, but the *having been in heaven.* This was the qualification for revealing the truths which are here spoken of

scended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, [1]which
14 is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in
the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted
15 up: that whosoever [2]believeth may in him have eternal life.

[1] Many ancient authorities omit *which is in heaven*.

[2] Or, *believeth in him may have*.

as heavenly things. But none (none, that is, of the sons of men; for this is a general maxim, the exception is not brought in till afterwards) could be in heaven without ascending from earth to heaven. No one has gone up into heaven, and by thus being in heaven obtained the knowledge of heavenly things; and, indeed, no one has been in heaven save He that came down out of heaven, the Son of man. Observe how insensibly our Lord has passed into the revelation of the heavenly things themselves. He could not speak of His power to reveal without speaking of that which is first and chief of all the heavenly things, viz. that He Himself came down out of heaven to be the Son of man (on the name 'Son of man' see chap. 1: 51). The reference to our Lord's humility is here strikingly in place. He came down from heaven and became the Son of man to reveal these heavenly truths and (vers. 14, 15) to give the heavenly blessings unto man. The weight of evidence compels us to believe that the concluding words of this verse, which is in heaven, as it stands in the Authorized Version, were not written by John. We can only suppose that they were a very early comment on, or addition to, the text, first written in the margin, then by mistake joined to the text. Were they genuine, they would probably refer to the abiding presence of the Son with the Father; but in such a sense it is very improbable that 'Son of man' would have been the name chosen. At all events, we have no other example of the same kind.

Vers. 14, 15. **And as Moses lifted on high the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted on high, that every one that believeth may in him have eternal life.** These verses continue the revelation of the heavenly things. The first truth is, that He who was in heaven came down to earth to be the Son of man. The next is, that the Son of man must be exalted, but in no such manner as the eager hopes of Nicodemus imagined. The secret counsel of heaven was, that He who was with God should as Son of man be lifted on high, as the serpent was lifted on high by Moses in the wilderness. Thus, indeed, it 'must be, that He may become the Giver of eternal life.—The word rendered 'lifted on high' occurs fifteen times in other parts of the New Testament, sometimes in such proverbial sayings as Matt. 23: 12, sometimes in reference to the exaltation of our Lord (Acts 2: 33, 5: 31). In this Gospel we find it in three verses besides the present. The general usage of the word in the New Testament and the Old is sufficient to show that it cannot here signify merely raising or lifting up. And yet

John's own explanation forbids us to exclude this thought. All the passages in this Gospel which connect the word with the Son of man must clearly be taken together; and chap. 12:33 (see note there) declares that the word contains a reference to the mode of the Saviour's death—the elevation on the cross. Nicodemus looked for the exaltation of the King in the coming kingdom of God. Exalted He shall be, not like the monarch sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, amid pomp and splendor, but receiving His true power and glory at the time when He hangs upon a tree an object of shame. The brazen serpent, made in the likeness of the destroyer, placed on a standard and held up to the gaze of all, might seem fitted only to call forth execration from those who were reminded of their peril, scorn and contempt from those who saw but a powerless symbol; but the dying Israelite looked thereon and lived. The looking was a type of faith—nay,—it was itself an act of faith in the promise of God. The serpent was raised on high that *all* might look on it; the exaltation of the Son of man, which begins with the shame of the cross, has for its object the giving of life to *all* (compare chap. 12: 32, and also Heb. 2: 9).—'That every one that believeth.' At first our Lord closely follows the words spoken in ver. 12. As there we read, 'Ye believe not,' so here, 'He that believeth:' as yet no qualifying word is added to deepen the significance of the 'belief.' What is before us is the general thought of receiving the word of Jesus. In that all is in truth included; for he that truly receives His word finds that its first and chief requirement is faith in Jesus Himself. So here, the trust is first general, but the thought of fellowship and union, so characteristic of this Gospel, comes in immediately, 'that every one that believeth *may in Him* have eternal life.' These verses which reveal the heavenly truths contain the very first mention of 'eternal life,' the blessing of which John, echoing his Master's words, is ever speaking. 'Eternal life' is *a present* possession for the believer (comp. ver. 36); its essence is union with God in Christ. See chap. 17: 3; 1 John 1: 2, 5: 11. The result of the interview with Nicodemus is not recorded, but the subsequent mention of him in the Gospel can leave no doubt upon our mind that, whether at this moment or not, he eventually embraced the truth. It would seem that, as the humiliation of Jesus deepened, he yielded the more to that truth against which at the beginning of this conversation he would most have rebelled. It is the persecution of Jesus that draws him forward in His defence (7: 51); it is when Jesus has been lifted up on the cross that he comes to pay Him honor (19: 39). He is thus a trophy, not of the power of signs alone, but the power of the heavenly things taught by Jesus.

At this point an important question arises. Are the next five verses a continuation of the preceding discourse? Are they words of Jesus or a reflection by the Evangelist himself upon his Master's words? Most commentators have taken the former view. The latter was first suggested by Erasmus, and has found favor with many thoughtful writers on this Gospel. And with reason. The first suggestion of a sudden break in the discourse may be startling, but a close examination of the verses will

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should

show that they present distinct traces of belonging to John: (1) Their general style and character remind us of the Prologue. (2) The past tenses 'loved' and 'were' in ver. 19 at once recall chap 1: 10, 11; and are generally more in harmony with the tone of the Evangelist's later reflections than with that of the Redeemer's discourse. (3) In ver. 11 Jesus says, 'ye *receive* not our testimony:' in ver. 19 the impression produced is not that of a present refusal, but rather of a past and continued rejection. (4) In no other place is the appellation 'only begotten' used by Jesus Himself in regard to the Son, though it is used by the Evangelist in chap. 1: 14, 1: 18, and 1 John 4: 9. It cannot be fairly said that there is anything really strange in the introduction of these reflections. It is altogether in the manner of this writer to comment on what he has related (see especially 12: 37-41); and in at least one instance he passes suddenly, without any mark of transition, from the words of another to his own,—for very few will suppose chap. 1: 16 to be a continuation of the Baptist's testimony (ver. 15). The view now advocated will receive strong confirmation if we convince the reader that there is a similar break after ver. 30 in this chapter, the last six verses belonging to the author of the Gospel and not to the Baptist.

Ver. 16. **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that every one that believeth in him may not perish, but have eternal life.** [The whole gospel in a nutshell.] In the preceding verses is recorded the first announcement of the gospel by our Lord, the revelation of the mystery made manifest by Him who came out of heaven. John pauses to set his Master's words in the light in which he himself had afterwards beheld them. Jesus had said '*must* be lifted on high;' but had given no reason. His disciple, whose message to the church was 'God is love' (1 John 4: 16), refers back the necessity to this truth. Whatever remains still hidden, so much as this is certain, that the humiliation and exaltation of Him who came down out of heaven were the expression of God's love to the whole world. The Son of man is the Son of God, the only begotten Son; the one term expresses His fitness for the work, the other points to His dignity and greatness of the Father's love. In this love the Father gave the Son: *to what* He surrendered Him is not here said; our Lord's own words (ver. 14) fill up the meaning. The universality of the blessing is marked with twofold emphasis; designed, not for Israel only, but for the whole *world*, it is the actual possession of *every* believer. The words relating to faith are more definite than in ver. 14; for (see chap. 2: 11) to 'believe in Him' points to a trust which casts itself on Him and presses into union with Him.—The Divine purpose is presented under two aspects, not one only (as in ver. 15); it is that the believer may be saved from perdition, and may now possess eternal life.—This verse contains most of the leading terms of John's theology. The 'world' does not in this verse designate those who had received and rejected the offer of salvation. It is thought of as at an earlier stage of its history; the light is not yet presented by

17 not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not
the Son into the world to judge the world; but that
18 the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not
hath been judged already, because he hath not be-

the acceptance or rejection of which the final state of the world shall be determined.

Ver. 17. **For God sent not the Son into the world that he may judge the world; but that the world through him may be saved.** The thought of the last verse is expanded. There it was the gift of God's love that was brought before us; now it is the mission of the Son. To 'may perish (ver. 16) here corresponds 'may judge the world, to 'have eternal life' answers 'may be saved.' This alone is sufficient to show that the word 'judge,' though not in itself equivalent to 'condemn,' has reference to a judgment which tends to condemnation. The Jews believed that Messiah would come to glorify Israel, but to judge the Gentiles; the solemn and emphatic repetition of 'the world' rebukes all such limitations, as effectually as the words of ver. 3 set aside the distinctions which were present to the thought of Nicodemus.—It may seem hard to reconcile the first part of this verse with 5: 22, 27; 9: 39; 12: 48. We must, however, recognise a twofold purpose in Christ's coming. He came to save, not to judge the world. He came to judge the world in so far as it will not allow itself to be saved; and this judgment is one that takes place even now (because even now there is wilful unbelief), though it will be consumed hereafter.

Ver. 18. **He that believeth in him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.** The two preceding verses express the Divine purpose in itself, and that purpose passing into accomplishment; this verse speaks of the actual result. Two of the terms of these verses, the *believing in Jesus* of ver. 16 and *judging* of ver. 17, are here brought together. He that abides in faith in Christ abides in a state to which judging belongs not; whilst the faith remains, the idea of judgment is excluded, for the believer is one with the Lord in whom he has placed his trust. Not so with the unbeliever; on him the sentence of judgment is already pronounced. As long as the unbelief is persisted in, so long does the sentence which the rejection of Jesus brings with it remain in force against him. The great idea of the Gospel, the division of all men into two classes severed from each other, is very clearly presented here; but no *unchangeable* division is thought of. The separation is the result of deliberate choice; and whilst the choice is adhered to, the severance abides.—As the faith of the believer is faith 'in Him,' faith that brings personal union, the unbelief is the rejection of His Person revealed in all its dignity, the only begotten Son of God.

lieved on the name of the only begotten Son of God.
19 And this is the judgment, that the light is come into
the world, and men loved the darkness rather than
20 the light; for their works were evil. For every one

Ver. 19. **And this is the judgment,**—the judgment is of this kind, takes place thus,—**because the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked.** These words bring out clearly that the 'not believing' spoken of in the last verse signifies an active rejection, and not the mere absence of belief—a rejection of the true light which in the person of Jesus came into the world, and henceforth ever is in the world. Men loved the darkness, for their works—not single deeds, but the whole expression and manifestation of their life—were wicked. The word used ('wicked') is that which elsewhere expresses the character of the arch-enemy as 'the wicked one' (John 17: 15; 1 John 3: 12). It denotes active evil, positive and pronounced wickedness.

Ver. 20. **For every one that committeth evil hateth the light, and he cometh not to the light lest his works should be convicted.** This verse explains the last, and refers the action there described to a general principle. The universal law is, that he who committeth evil hateth the light. Not 'he that *hath committed,*' for what is spoken of is the bent and the spirit of the man's life. The word 'evil' here is not the same as that rendered 'wicked' in ver. 19, but is more general. The one word means evil in active manifestation; the other what is worthless, good for nothing. No doubt the second word is used in this verse partly for the sake of vivid contrast with the real and abiding 'truth' of ver. 21, partly because what is worthless and unsubstantial will not stand the test of coming to that very light which shows in all its reality whatever is substantial and true. Every one whose life is thus evil knows that in the presence of the light he must stand self-condemned. The experience is painful, and he endeavors to avoid it by turning from the light, till, as conscience still asserts its power, he seeks defence against himself by hating the light (compare 1 Kings 22: 8). We must not forget the application that is in John's mind. The light that is come is Jesus Himself. He is come; but men also must come to Him. If they came not, the cause was a moral one. Before He came, some light had been in the world (1: 5); those who, living a life of evil (whether open wickedness or a worthless self-righteousness), hated this light, were thus prepared to reject the Light Himself. The last word of the verse is remarkable, as it is more naturally applied to the doer than to his deed. Not only will the works be shown by the light—be exposed in their true character; the works are looked on as if of themselves the criminals—they will be self-convicted, self-condemned. The thought of *self-conviction* has in this Gospel an importance that can hardly be over-estimated.

that [1]doeth ill* hateth the light, and cometh not to
21 the light, lest his works should be [2]reproved. But he
that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works
may be made manifest, [3]that they have been wrought
in God.

## CHAPTER 3: 22–36.

### *The Passing away of the Baptist in the presence of the True Bridegroom of the Church.*

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into
the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them,

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[1] Or, *practiceth*. [2] Or, *convicted*. [3] Or, *because*.

* For "ill" read "evil." So in ver. 29.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 21. **But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God.** In contrast with those who commit evil is another class—those who do the truth. The words expressing *action* in vers. 20, 21, are different: that in ver. 20 ('committeth') refers directly to the particular acts, that which is used here (which properly denotes *to make*, *to produce*) brings into view rather the result. The man here spoken of is (so to speak) at work in raising the abiding structure of 'the truth.' So far as the truth has been revealed to him, his life is faithful to it; his works are an expression of the truth that is in his heart. As Jesus says (chap. 18: 37), 'Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice;' so here we read, 'He that doeth the truth cometh to the light.' There is a natural affinity between truth and light; he who is faithful to truth received is, through the very nature of the truth within him, impelled towards Him who is the Truth. He does not come to the light that his works may be made known to others; there is no self-seeking,—perhaps even it is not the conscious purpose of the man himself that is spoken of, but rather the instinctive aim of the truth within him, and thus in reality the purpose of God, that all the works of God be made manifest. The works of this doer of truth have been wrought in God. The discipline by which he is led to the Son is of the Father (see chap. 6 especially). For this cause he comes, and must needs come, at the bidding of the truth, that the works of God in him may be brought out of all concealment and made manifest. His coming to Christ is itself a manifestation of the preceding work of God in him.

### *The Passing away of the Baptist in the presence of the True Bridegroom of the Church.*—Vers. 22–36.

CONTENTS.—This section affords us our last view of the great Forerunner when, at the moment of his disappearance, he utters his highest testimony to Jesus as the true

23 and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there [1] was much water there:

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[1] Gr. *were many waters.*

Bridegroom of the Church, alone to be welcomed by all waiting hearts. Hence it immediately precedes Christ's proclamation of His truth beyond Judea. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 22–30; (2) vers. 31–36.

Ver. 22. **After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.** The introductory words 'After these things' may possibly include a considerable period. Apparently several months intervened between the Passover of chap. 2: 13 and the visit to Samaria (chap. 4); but only two events belonging to this period are related. The words of this verse, however (*tarried* and *baptized*), show that after leaving Jerusalem Jesus remained for some length of time in the country parts of Judea. In no other passage than this is there any mention of the Saviour's baptizing, and chap. 4: 2 explains that this baptism was only indirectly His. Still, however, it is clear that the baptism was by the authority of Jesus, the disciples acting only as His ministers. Yet they did not baptize with Christian baptism in the full sense of the term. They were engaged in preparatory work like that of the Baptist, just as the Twelve were sent forth by Jesus to declare the very message which John had preached (Matt. 10: 7). The baptism of the Spirit was still future (chap. 7: 39). The next verse shows the main design of this section. When Jesus baptized in Judea, He came into direct and necessary comparison with John.

Ver. 23. **And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there were many waters there; and they came and were baptized.** Where Ænon and Salim were situated it is not easy to determine. The position assigned them by Eusebius and Jerome, near the northern boundary of Samaria, does not agree well with ver. 22. It is more probable that Salim is the Shilhim (translated Salem in the LXX.) of Josh. 15: 32, a town not far from the southern limit of Judea. In this verse of Joshua (in the Hebrew) Shilhim is directly followed by *Ain*, from which Ænon differs only in being an intensive form—*Ain* denoting a *spring*, and *Ænon*, *springs*. The objection to this identification is that, as John was clearly in the neighborhood of Jesus, it takes the latter from the route leading to Samaria and Galilee. But the history of the events of the period is so brief and fragmentary that this objection has not much weight. John no doubt alludes to the meaning of Ænon when he adds that there were 'many waters' there. [The most probable site of Ænon is at the present village *Salim*, east of Nablus (Shechem) in Samaria, near the passage of the Jordan at Succoth, and far away from that near Jericho. There are copious springs there, and three or four miles north of the springs is a village called '*Aynun*. This is the view of Robinson, Stanley, Conder, Thomson.—P. S.]

24 and they came, and were baptized. For John was not
25 yet cast into prison. There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew
26 about purifying. And they came unto John, and said to him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same
27 baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it have

Ver. 24. **For John was not yet cast into prison.** Words in which the Evangelist vindicates the accuracy of his narrative, and corrects a mistake apparently prevailing in the Church when he wrote. The earlier Gospels, dealing mainly with the Galilean work of Jesus, do not mention His entering upon His public ministry until after the Baptist had been delivered up. This seems to have led to an impression that the Baptist was imprisoned before our Lord entered on His public work. The false inference is here corrected.

Ver. 25. **There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying.** In the circumstances just described, discussion would inevitably arise as to the relative position and value of the two baptisms. A 'Jew' (see note on chap. 1 : 19) had placed the baptism of Jesus above that of John in regard to its purifying power. Although the Jews in general were hostile to Jesus, this man may have shared the convictions of Nicodemus (vers. 1 : 2). The disciples of John refused to regard their master's baptism as less efficacious than that of another, who had been himself baptized by him. Unable either to set the question at rest, or to ignore the opposition of the Jew, they brought the matter of contention before John. On the symbolic character of John's baptism, see the note on ver. 5; on 'purification,' see 2 : 6; 13 : 10; 15 : 3, and 1 John 1 : 7, 9.

Ver. 26. **And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.** Their description of Jesus (whom they do not name) shows their feelings. This man came to thee beyond Jordan, it has been thy great object to magnify his fame; and yet he is now thy rival, he baptizes, and all are flocking to him rather than to thee. Their last words are in their lips but a natural exaggeration; to the Evangelist, however, they are an unconscious prophecy (see an exactly similar instance in 12 : 19, 20). This is the last trial of the Baptist's fidelity to his mission, and nobly is it sustained

Ver. 27. **John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him out of heaven.** Not for a moment does he enter into their jealous advocacy of his claims. Understanding the true force of their hasty words, 'All men come to

28 been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me
witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I
29 am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the
bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which
standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of
the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is ful-

him,' he tells them that such honor, such position, Jesus cannot receive unless it have been given Him from heaven. He says this in words so general that they seem certainly intended to point to himself also. 'Each of us, in accomplishing God's work, will receive the place appointed to him from heaven.'

Ver. 28. **Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him.** The acceptance of the lower place was no new thing to John. 'Ye remind me that I have borne witness to Him; ye yourselves bear witness to me, that my testimony to Him contained in it all that now offends you.' Of the two sayings here quoted, one ('I am not the Christ') is to be found in 1: 20: the other is not given in this Gospel in the very words, but is implied in 1: 30, 31, and no doubt had been expressly uttered by John to his disciples.

Ver. 29. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore hath been made full.** 'He that hath the bride,' he and no other, 'is the bridegroom.' The Lord is taking home His bride—His people. To the name of bridegroom I have no claim, nor can I have the bridegroom's joy. But in his joy his friends must needs share. The friend of the bridegroom that standeth and heareth his voice, catching the first sound as he draws near, listening to the words and tones in which his joy breaks forth throughout the marriage feast, he too has his joy, a reflection of the rejoicing of the bridegroom: this joy is mine, and it is now filled to the full.' In these exquisitely tender and beautiful words does the Baptist at once reprove the natural but petty jealousies of his disciples and set forth his own relation to Jesus. The image employed is common in the Old Testament (Isa. 54; Jer. 3: 31; Hos. 2; Ezek. 16, 23), even if nothing be said of the Song of Solomon, and is taken up in the New (Matt. 9: 15, 25; 2 Cor. 11; Eph. 5; Rev. 19, 21). By the 'friend' John does not mean the particular friend who presided over the marriage ceremonies (the Shoshben), for the words 'standeth and heareth' are unsuitable to a functionary whose duties were those of action. But these words exactly correspond to the position of the Baptist as one who stood apart and listened. Once only does the Forerunner seem to have met with Jesus: afterwards he watched His course and rejoiced, and pointed his disciples to his Lord.

30 filled.* He must increase, but I must decrease.
31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he

* For 'fulfilled' read 'made full' [and so 15: 11; 16: 24; 17: 13. [See 'Classes of Passages,' 14].—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 30. **He must increase, but I must decrease.** What the disciples now see is but the beginning of a process that must continue. The necessity spoken of here is another statement of the heavenly gift of ver. 27. John must become less and less, whilst the glory of his Lord will increase without limit or end; and thus his 'decreasing' is not the failure but the accomplishment of his work.*

It is quite impossible to read carefully the following verses without perceiving that they bear a remarkable resemblance to the early part of the chapter, and that the general style and language are those of the Evangelist himself. In ver. 31 we read of him 'that cometh out of heaven;' in ver. 13 of Him 'that came down out of heaven.' That He who is from heaven beareth witness of what He hath seen, and that His witness is not received, we read both in ver. 32 and in ver. 11. The 35th verse might perhaps seem to contain Christ's own words, but not such as the Baptist would be likely to employ. So also in ver. 36 all the terms used, 'he that believeth in,' 'the Son' (standing absolutely), 'eternal life,' 'hath eternal life,' remind us of the language of the Evangelist himself and of Christ's discourses as related in this Gospel, especially in this chapter (vers. 15, 16, 17), but it is hardly possible to suppose them used by John the Baptist. Those writers who cannot admit that there is a break after ver. 30 are constrained to confess that the Baptist's subsequent words are expressed in the Evangelist's own language and style. It is a far simpler and more probable theory that the Evangelist (as in 1: 16 and 3: 16—see notes there) passes from his narrative into a meditation which it suggests, gathering together the main thoughts of the two sections which precede.

Ver. 31. **He that cometh from above is above all; He that is out of the earth is out of the earth, and out of the earth he speaketh.** The claim of the Baptist's disciples that to their master should be accorded a higher place than to Jesus, and John's emphatic testimony to his own lower station, lead the Evangelist to reflect upon the words of Jesus to Nicodemus as decisive of all such

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[* 'The true description of the relation between John and Christ, and between the Old Covenant and the New, in the primitive church, in the mediæval church, in this modern age, in the life of every evangelical community and of every individual Christian. *Increase:* in labors, in authority, in disciples. *Decrease:* be diminished. Noble freedom from envy. An admonition to his disciples. St. John the Baptist's day in the calendar, the longest day (June 24th), after which the days decrease; the birth-day of Christ (Dec. 25), one of the shortest, from which the days grow longer.'—Lange.)

speaketh: [1]he that cometh from heaven is above all.
32 What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth wit-
33 ness; and no man receiveth his witness. He that
hath received his witness hath set his seal to *this*, that
34 God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh
the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *he that cometh from heaven beareth witness of what he hath seen and heard.*

questions. 'He that cometh from above' and 'He that cometh out of heaven' are clearly the same as 'He that came down out of heaven' (ver. 13), and all three expressions are designations of Jesus. There is but One who thus 'cometh from above' (though many others have received their mission from above), and He therefore is above all. In comparison with Him, every other prophet or teacher has his origin out of the earth; and as is his origin, so is his nature, so is his utterance.

Ver. 32. **He that cometh out of heaven beareth witness of what he hath seen and heard; and no man receiveth his witness.** In ver. 12 we have seen that heaven is spoken of as the place of immediate divine knowledge and light. Jesus alone belongs to this sphere: all the prophets before His coming, though divinely commissioned, had 'the earth' as the starting-point of their utterances, spoke of what they had received on earth, spoke truly but not perfectly. The Divine light was reflected from the prophets to the world around. In Jesus the heavenly light itself came into the world. Jesus alone, then, beareth witness to that which He hath seen and which He heard, and (here again is the mournful cadence of this Gospel) no one receiveth His witness. So few receive, that they seem as nothing in comparison with those who reject. That the rejection is not in strictness universal the next verse declares.

Ver. 33. **He that received his witness set his seal to this, that God is true.** Every man who accepts His witness and thus declares that Jesus is true, in that very act attests, sets his seal to, the declaration that God is true. (For the opposite, see 1 John 5: 10). A mere prophet might be unfaithful or might err. Jesus 'comes out of heaven,' declares 'what He hath seen,' and 'what He heard' from God: to disbelieve Him is to disbelieve God, to declare Him true is to declare God true. This is further explained and confirmed by the next verse.

Ver. 34. **For he whom God sent speaketh the words of God.** The last verse rests on the thought that the words of Jesus are the words of God. Here it is shown that this is involved in the very proposition that Jesus is the Sent of God. Strictly, there have been many whom God has sent,—for example, John the Baptist (chap. 1: 6): his words were true, and were words of God. But where one is thus isolated as sent by God (and this is repeatedly done in this

35 measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given
36 all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that [1] obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

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[1] Or, *believeth not.*

Gospel), he is *the Sent* in a peculiar and pre-eminent sense. He speaketh not 'words of God' only, but 'the words of God,' giving *all* the revelation that God gives. The enabling power thus to speak is the gift of the Spirit. Every one whom God sends is enabled to speak God's words—words that, for the portion of the revelation he is commissioned to give, are truly God's words—**For not by measure giveth he the Spirit.** He gives the Spirit not partially, but completely, for the purpose of enabling him who is sent to speak words of God. Rising from the partial and incomplete to that which is full and perfect, we find but One who has thus been sent by God, and but One who receives the Spirit in unmeasured fulness, enabling not for the complete declaration of a part only, but for the perfect revelation of the whole of the words of God.

Ver. 35. **The Father loveth the Son.** There is a continual heightening of the thought and expression. We read of Him 'that cometh from above,' Him 'that cometh out of heaven,' Him 'whom God sent,'—'the Son,' whom 'the Father loveth.' In ver. 17 we read that the Father sent the Son to save the world, because He 'so loved the world' (ver. 16): here we read of the love of the Father towards the Son, who thus gave Himself for the accomplishment of the purpose of the Father. From chap. 10: 17 it seems probable that it is of this love that we must understand the verse—of a love, therefore, referring to the work of redemption, not to the essential relation of the Son to the Father (comp. note on 5: 20).—**And hath given all things into his hands.** From perfect love follows perfect communication not of 'the words of God' only (ver. 34), but of *all things* possessed. The Father has given all things into the Son's hand. Whatsoever the Son speaks or gives or does, is spoken, given, done, by the Father.

Ver. 36. **He that believeth in the Son hath eternal life.** As all things are in the Son's hand by the gift of the Father, the destiny of all men depends on their relation to the Son. He that believeth in the Son has in Him the highest of all blessings, life eternal; has this in present possession—involved in the communion of faith in which he lives.—**But he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.** Over against the believer is here set, not the man who does not believe, but he that disobeys. The change from believing to obedience results from the thought of the last verse: supreme power is given to the Son; therefore he that receives Him not by faith is guilty of diso-

## Chapter 4: 1–42.

### *Jesus and the Samaritans.*

1 When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and

beying His authority; not faith only, but the obedience of faith, is His due. From the eyes of all such life is hidden whilst the unbelief and disobedience shall last. The rejection of the Son brings with it the wrath of God, by whom all things were given into the Son's hand: this is the present and the abiding heritage of him that obeyeth not the Son.

### *Jesus and the Samaritans.*—Vers. 1-42.

Contents.—The general object aimed at in the relation of the story of Nicodemus in chap. 3 is pursued in the account given us in this section of the interview of Jesus, first with the Samaritan woman, and then with the inhabitants of Sychar, who are brought by her to listen to His teaching. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 1–4, introductory, after the manner of the introduction to the story of Nicodemus in 2: 23–25; (2) vers. 5-26, interview with the Samaritan woman; (3) vers. 27–30, the mission of the woman to her fellow-townsmen; (4) vers. 31–38, the conversation of Jesus with His disciples in regard to the nature and success of their work; (5) vers. 39–42, the work of Jesus among the inhabitants of Sychar.

[The scene at Jacob's well presents a most graphic, and yet most unartificial picture of nature and human life as it still remains, though in decay, at the foot of Gerizim and Ebal, the most beautiful section of Palestine. There is still the well of Jacob, recognized as such by Samaritans, Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians alike; there the sanctuary on the top of Gerizim, where the Passover is annually celebrated by the remnant of the Samaritan sect, according to the prescription of Moses; there are the waving grainfields, ripening for the harvest in the well-watered, fertile valley. We are confronted with the historic antagonism of Jews and Samaritans, which survives in Nablus, the modern Shechem, where the Samaritan synagogue and the Samaritan Pentateuch are shown to the stranger; here we see the genuine humanity of Jesus as He sat down, 'wearied with His journey,' though not weary of His work of saving souls, His elevation above the rabbinical prejudice which forbade conversing with any woman out of doors, his superhuman knowledge and dignity, and his surpassing wisdom of parabolic teaching; here the life-like sketch of a sinful, yet quick-witted woman, full of curiosity and interest in the religious question of the day and running to tell her neighbors her great discovery of the prophet who had touched her conscience, excited her thirst for the water of life, and led her from Jacob's well to the fountain of salvation, and from the dispute about the place of worship to the highest conception of God as an omnipotent Spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Truly, no poet could have invented such a story, and no historian who was not present at the scene could have told it so well.—P. S.]

Vers. 1–3. **When therefore the Lord perceived that the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus maketh and baptizeth more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not,** 2 baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus

**but his disciples,) he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.** The object of these verses is to explain the reason why Jesus now left Judæa for Galilee. How long He had remained in Judæa we are not informed (see the note on chap. 3 : 22), being only told that in the country districts the success of His ministry had excited the notice of the Pharisees (of Jerusalem), and had led to comparisons between the two teachers who had so suddenly appeared in the land. It will be observed that the circumstances described in this verse are substantially the same as those brought before us in the words of the disciples of John after their disputation with the Jew (chap. 3 : 26). They said to their master that to Jesus all were coming,—that is, by plain inference, more were flocking to Jesus than to the Baptist. It is only necessary to allow a short interval of time for the diffusion of the news, and we are brought to the state of things presented here. If, then, there is this close connection between chap. 3 : 25, 26, and the opening of the present chapter, it seems impossible to believe that the imprisonment of the Baptist can have taken place in the interval, when in chap. 3 : 24 the Evangelist expressly refers to the fact that John was as yet at liberty. The imprisonment is nowhere expressly mentioned by him; but while it is very easy to understand such an omission if the event fell in one of those intervals which separate so markedly the successive narratives of his Gospel, it would be strange if, in a closely connected paragraph, he should first record that the imprisonment had not yet taken place, and then, although the event took place at the very time, pass over it in silence. It seems, then, much more natural to interpret the words heard by the Pharisees as meaning that Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John *is making and baptizing*, than to suppose the contrast to be between the *present* action of the one and the *past* ministry of the other,—as if the words were, 'Jesus maketh more disciples than John *used to make.*' Hence we regard the ministry of John as still enduring at the period to which this verse relates. The journey into Galilee now alluded to is not, therefore, that recorded in Matt. 4 : 12, which was taken after the imprisonment of John. (See further the note on chap. 6 : 1.) On the determination of this question rests the explanation of our Lord's departure from Judæa. If John had now been delivered up to his foes, the Evangelist's meaning might be that Jesus withdrew from a persecution which those who had successfully opposed the Baptist would surely raise against One whose success was even greater. But such a meaning is beset with difficulties, for there would be something strange and unlike the style of this Gospel in so brief an allusion to the avoidance by our Lord of open hostility at this early period of His ministry; and it would not be easy to see why the Pharisees should be expressly mentioned and not 'the Jews.' If, however, we take the view defended above, that the Baptist was still pursuing his course, these difficulties disappear. Not to escape from persecution, but to

3 himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judæa,

put an end to comparisons which (however true in fact) were mischievously used, Jesus retired from the land in which John was teaching and baptizing. True, He must increase and John must decrease; but the hour for the close of John's preparatory labors had not yet come, and the purposes of Jesus Himself would be best furthered by the complete accomplishment of the Baptist's mission. Individuals might be removed from the circle of John's disciples and be received by Jesus (see chap. 1: 37); but a general impression of this kind could not be made until a certain work of preparation had taken place. For His own sake, therefore, it was not desirable that this preparation-work should prematurely close. Again, we shall thus better understand the mention of the Pharisees. That class had rigidly and suspiciously inquired into John's right to assume the position of a prophet, and the report which they now heard might well rouse them to renewed action in their character of defenders of the faith and religious practice of their nation. Any such action on their part could hardly fail at this stage to be injurious, even if it were directed against John and not against Jesus Himself. But there was no reason to think that their opposition would be limited to the Baptist. Jesus, too, would have His work interrupted by their embittered feeling. Not, therefore, to avoid His enemies, but to transfer His labors to freer and more open fields, did our Lord withdraw from Judæa at this time. The remarkable indirectness of the language of this verse is explained by the writer's wish to seize the very moment at which the withdrawal from Judea became necessary. The sojourn of Jesus in the neighborhood of John's sphere of action brought out John's distinct confession of the relation in which he stood to his Lord. That was for the present enough; and the sojourn terminated at the very moment when it threatened to be the means of injuring the Baptist's work, and of precipitating the open conflict between Jesus and the Jews. It seems most natural to take the word 'knew' or 'perceived' as referring, not to information obtained, but to supernatural knowledge (compare chap. 2: 24, 25). Most seemly, therefore, is the designation of Jesus here as 'the Lord'—a rare usage with John, who commonly employs the personal name Jesus. Because He was the Lord, not man only, He discerned the first stirrings of hostility in the minds of the Pharisees and the occasion which gave them birth. Afterwards the name Jesus occurs, because the Evangelist quotes the very words of the report,—a report indeed containing an incorrect statement, set right in the parenthesis which follows. But there was nothing unnatural in the error. Jesus might easily be represented as baptizing (compare chap. 3: 22), because His disciples could only have acted in His name and by His authority. The Pharisees could not know why He should abstain from performing the act Himself: we know that His baptism was not with water, but with the Holy Ghost, and 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given' (chap. 7: 39). Such, then, were the circumstances amidst

4 and departed again into Galilee. And he must
5 needs pass through Samaria. So he cometh to a

which Jesus 'left' Judæa and retired into Galilee. The word used for 'left' is interesting, and confirms our interpretation. It means literally 'let go,' 'let alone;' and it is hardly possible not to feel that by his use of it the Evangelist would direct our attention to the fact that Israel's rejection of God's mercy was, in the wisdom of the Divine arrangements, the cause why it was itself rejected, and the other nations of the world called. It should be added that we have assumed throughout that Ænon and Salim were situated in Judæa, so that both Jesus and the Baptist were at this time in the same region of the country. If Salim was near Scythopolis, in Samaria (which seems very unlikely), the argument is not seriously affected. In any case, it is clear that for the time Jesus wished to remove His sphere of labor from the immediate view of the Pharisees by a retirement into Galilee.

Ver. 4. **And he must needs go through Samaria.** The natural route from Judæa to Galilee lay through Samaria. The other route, through the country on the east of Jordan, was so much longer that no one would choose it unless desirous of avoiding Samaria. The necessity here spoken of, therefore, may simply have reference to geographical position, and to the present urgent motive for reaching Galilee without delay. Still, the use of 'must' in this Gospel compels us to lay an emphasis on the word, and to interpret it as denoting more than merely usage or convenience. If the Evangelist's thought is that the hostility of the Pharisees (partly actually existing, partly foreseen) made it necessary for the Saviour to hasten into Galilee, then he would have us understand that the Jews themselves brought about this visit to the hated nation of the Samaritans. But above and beyond all this, there seems a clear intimation of the truth brought before us in ver. 34, chap. 9: 4, etc.: here, as always, Jesus acts according to His knowledge of His Father's will.

Ver. 5. **He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar.** 'From the hills through which the main route of Palestine must always have run the traveller descends into a wide plain, the widest and the most beautiful of the plains of the Ephraimite mountains, one mass of corn unbroken by boundary or hedge, from the midst of which start up olive trees, themselves unenclosed as the fields in which they stand. Over the hills which close the northern end of this plain, far away in the distance, is caught the first glimpse of the snowy ridge of Hermon. Its western side is bounded by the abutments of two mountain ranges, running from west to east. These ranges are Gerizim and Ebal; and up the opening between them, not seen from the plain, lies the modern town of Nablûs . . . the most beautiful, perhaps it might be said the only very beautiful spot in central Palestine.' * Nablûs is a corruption of Neapolis, the name city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of

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* Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 233, 234.

given by the Romans to the 'new city' built nearly on the site of the ancient Shechem. The city which gave its name to this district of the Holy Land, Samaria, distant about six miles, had recently been rebuilt in a style of great magnificence by Herod the Great, who gave it the name of Sebaste. But, partly through the prestige of its antiquity and famous history, and partly through the power of religious associations, Shechem was pre-eminently the city of Samaria. It lay, as has been said, at the foot of Mount Gerizim, on the summit of which was the temple of the Samaritans, the stronghold of their worship for nearly three hundred years. It is impossible here to do more than trace the main outlines of the history of the Samaritan people. Their origin has in modern times been a subject of warm controversy. The narrative of 2 Kings 25: 12 certainly seems to imply that *all* the inhabitants of the country were carried away to 'Halah and Habor and the cities of the Medes' (2 Kings 17: 6): Josephus also speaks of the transplanting of all the people. But, apart from the improbability that such a wholesale deportation would be made, we find both in Scripture (2 Chron. 34: 9, and perhaps 30: 1, 5, 10) and also in Josephus intimations that some few at least of the inhabitants remained, after the land had been colonized by settlers from Cuthah and other cities of Assyria. In the manner related in 2 Kings 17 these colonists were led to mingle a worship of Jehovah as the tutelary Deity of their new country with the idolatry brought with them from their native cities. What we read of their history at a later date is in exact accord with the mixed character of their race and their worship. They referred their own origin only to Assyria (Ezra 4: 2), yet they were desirous of fraternizing with the Jews in their work of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem; and, when finally repulsed by the Jews and defeated in their attempts to injure and frustrate their work, they built (B. C. 409) a rival temple on Mount Gerizim after the model of that in Jerusalem, taking as their first high priest one whom Nehemiah had expelled (Neh. 13: 28). From this time they seem to have maintained a system of worship modelled on that of the Jews, their older idolatry being, as far as we can judge, entirely renounced. Of the Scriptures the Samaritans received one portion only, the Pentateuch; but for this they professed peculiar reverence. A comparison of the Samaritan Pentateuch with that of the Hebrew Bible shows that many alterations had been introduced into the text by the Samaritans, but at the same time that these had only been made for the purpose of authenticating their own mode of worship and of maintaining the honor of their sacred places. This partial agreement, however, between the religious beliefs of the two peoples, so far from preventing, had really led to the most determined hostility between them. To the Jew, a man of purely Gentile descent and a man of mixed race were equally Gentiles; and an approximation to Jewish belief and modes of worship gave no claim of brotherhood with Jews. Hebrew

6 ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and

literature is full of strangely varying statements in regard to the Cuthim (as they are called),—statements which probably reflect the relations subsisting between the nations at different periods (see Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. 1117, 1118). In the time of our Lord the temple on Mount Gerizim had long been in ruins, but both the mount and the city at its foot had retained their sacred character; and it was here that the true Samaritan practices and traditions had their strongest hold on the people. The slight sketch which we have been able to give of the history of this people will be sufficient to show how singular was their situation. The ancient writings of the Jews themselves deal with Samaritans now as with heathen, now as with men belonging to the stock of Israel; and the narrative of this chapter places them in the same position—a position not wholly Gentile, but intermediate between the Jewish and the Gentile world. It has been commonly assumed that the 'city called Sychar' is identical with Shechem, and the chief subject of controversy has been the motive for the change of name. Whilst some have regarded the alteration as a mere error of pronunciation, most have ascribed it to Jewish prejudice, interpreting Sychar as 'drunkard' or 'falsehood:' others, again, have considered the word identical with a well Sokhar mentioned in the Talmud. It seems more probable, however, that Sychar is a village still known by a name substantially the same (El-Askar), situated about two miles to the east of the present town of Nablûs. This village is nearer than Shechem can have been to the well which bore the name of Jacob; and it is much more likely that the Evangelist would pause to describe the position of such a place than that of the ancient city of Shechem.—**Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.** There can be no doubt that, in speaking of Jacob's gift to his son Joseph, John refers to Gen. 48: 22, 'I have given thee one portion above thy brethren,'—whatever meaning may be attached to the last words of that verse. The Hebrew word here rendered 'portion' is identical with the name Shechem. At Shechem, therefore, were the bones of Joseph buried (Josh. 24: 32), and the city and surrounding country 'became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.'

Ver. 6. **Now there was a fountain there, Jacob's fountain.** The distinction between the natural spring and the artificial well is usually maintained with great care in the language of Scripture. Now and then, however (as is very natural), a well, fed as it is by springs, is itself called a spring or fountain. Thus 'the angel of the Lord found' Hagar 'by a *fountain* of water in the wilderness' (Gen. 16: 7), and 'the *well* was called Beer-lahai-roi' (ver. 14); and in the narrative of Gen. 24, wherein the Authorized Version we find 'well' three times (in vers. 11, 13, 16), the original has first *well*, then *spring* or *fountain* twice. The country round Shechem was a place of fountains and depths that spring out in valley and hill' (Deut. 8: 7); but

Jacob's [1] well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat [2] thus by the [1] well. It

[1] Gr. *spring;* and so in ver. 14, but not in vers. 11, 12. [2] Or, *as he was.*

it is not of such natural springs that we must here think. What in this verse is called a fountain is a 'well' in vers. 11 and 12. Yet it may be worth noticing that the latter name is used by the woman of Samaria: to the Evangelist the well is a 'fountain,' and his name implies far deeper and richer thoughts than hers. An almost continuous tradition fixes beyond doubt the position of this well, which lies very near the road by which our Lord would be travelling from Judæa to Galilee; and amongst the inhabitants of the adjoining towns it is still known as the well of Jacob or the fountain of Jacob.* When visited by Maundrell two hundred years ago the well was more than 100 feet deep, but the accumulation of rubbish has diminished the depth to 75 feet: the bore is 9 or 10 feet wide. That Jacob (if indeed this patriarch's name was rightly given to the well, and there is no reason for questioning the tradition) should have sunk this well, excavated out of the solid rock, in the immediate neighborhood of abundant springs, is a striking proof of the insecurity of his position in the 'land of promise,' and of his precarious relations with the people of the country.—**Jesus therefore, being wearied of his journey, sat thus by the fountain.** Shechem was one of the main halting-places on the route from Jerusalem to Galilee. Turning off a little from the road, Jesus reached the well, and (now alone, because His disciples had gone into Sychar to buy provisions) wearied with a long day's travel He 'sat thus'—sat, wearied as He was—'by the fountain,' or on the low wall built around the well.—**It was about the sixth hour.** As in the other passages in which John mentions the 'hour,' there has been great difference of opinion respecting the time intended. If the ordinary reckoning be adopted, as in the other Gospels, the sixth hour would fall in the morning, a little before noon. But for the reasons assigned in the note on chap. 1: 39, it seems much more probable that a different computation is followed here, in which, as among ourselves, the hour is of *fixed* length (not a twelfth part of the variable interval between sunrise and sunset), and the time is reckoned from midnight and noon. By 'sixth hour,' therefore, according to the usage of the ancients, we must understand either the hour between 5 and 6 A. M. or the hour between 5 and 6 P. M. On the whole, the latter seems more probable. If our Lord's journey through Samaria took place in the middle of December (see

*['This is one of the few places in the Holy Land which can be identified with certainty. Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Samaritans, all agree in regard to the site of Jacob's well. Here our blessed Lord, weary of travel, but not of His work of saving souls, offered to a poor woman (the Samaritan Magdalena) the living water of eternal life, and revealed to her the sublime truth of the true spiritual worship of God, who is all pervading, omnipresent Spirit.'—Schaff. *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 414,]

7 was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman
of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her,
8 Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone
9 away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan
woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that

the note on ver. 35), 5 P. M. would be about the time of sunset, and the evening twilight would last until about half-past 6. This hour was the ordinary time at which women came forth to draw water at the public wells. No difficulty need be felt on account of the lateness of the hour, for very little time is really required for all that is here related up to the 38th verse (comp. Mark 1: 32; Luke 4: 40.)

Ver. 7. **There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water.** By Samaria here we are of course to understand the country not the city of Samaria. The woman belonged to Sychar; by race and religion she was a Samaritan, and it is to this fact, as is shown by the preposition employed in the original, that the evangelist would direct our special attention. It was very natural that she should come at this time to draw water at the well; but from the narrative that follows it seems probable that something more than the excellence of the water drew her to it day by day. One so strongly imbued with the ancient traditions of her countrymen could not but turn with deepest interest to 'Jacob's well.'

Vers. 7. 8. **Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy food.)** The departure of the disciples had left Jesus thus dependent on the woman's kindness; for they had left no vessel by which the water could be drawn from the deep well. It has been conjectured that the recorder of this narrative had not gone on to Sychar with his fellow-disciples, but himself heard the Savior's conversation with the Samaritan woman. The conjecture is most improbable, if not altogether contrary to the statement of the Evangelist. We cannot doubt that it was from our Lord's own lips that the beloved disciple received the whole account.

Ver. 9. **The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.** It is evident that Jesus was at once recognized as a Jew, probably through some difference of accent, or language, or dress. We can hardly suppose that the woman was really surprised at the request preferred, so natural from the lips of a weary traveler (comp. Gen. 24: 17). We may rather imagine her as hastening to procure what was asked for, whilst not failing to point out how inconsistent with Jewish principles it was to ask even for such a favor as this. As has been said above, the maxims of the Jews respecting intercourse with the Samaritan people varied much at different times, and it is not easy to say what rules prevailed at the period with which we are here

thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a
Samaritan woman? [1](For Jews have no dealings
10 with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said unto
her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is
that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest
have asked of him, and he would have given thee

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[1] Some ancient authorities omit *For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*

concerned. One precept of the Talmud (quoted in *Smith's Dic. of the Bible* iii. 1117) approves their mode of preparing the flesh of animals; others commend their unleavened bread, their cheese, and finally all their food. Elsewhere, however, we find restrictions; and the wine, vinegar, etc., of the Samaritans are forbidden to every Israelite, their country only with its roads and its other products being regarded as clean. This narrative shows that it was held lawful to buy food in a Samaritan town, so that the words of this verse must probably be understood to mean that Jews avoided all *familiar* intercourse with the alien people, sought and expected no favors at their hands. It is usually assumed that the last sentence is inserted by the Evangelist in the interest of Gentile readers. It may be so, as such short parenthetical explanations are certainly to be found elsewhere in this Gospel. There seems, however, no sufficient reason for removing the clause from the woman's answer. The repetition of the well-known maxim gives a piquant emphasis to her words, bringing out with sharp distinctness the contrast between the principles of the countrymen of Jesus and the request which necessity had extorted. The use of the present tense ('have no dealings') adds some support to this view; and one can hardly avoid the conviction that, had John himself given such an explanation, he would have so expressed himself as to avoid all appearance of discordance with his statement in ver. 8.

Ver. 10. **Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.** We may well believe that there was something in the manner of Jesus, when uttering His first words, that invited conversation, and was intended to lead the woman to inquiry. This point gained, His next words could but cause surprise and excite remark. Her answer had told of her recognition of Him as a Jew: His reply declares her ignorance of Him and what He was able to give. The 'gift of God' is probably not different from the 'living water' afterwards mentioned. John himself gives an explanation of the latter in chap. 7: 39. and his interpretation must be applied here also. 'Living water,' then denotes the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was pre-eminently the promised gift of the Father (see especially Isa. 44; Joel 2), beautifully and most aptly symbolized by the fresh springing water, which wherever it comes makes the desert

11 living water. The woman saith unto him, [1] Sir,
thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is
deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?
12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave
us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons

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[1] Or *Lord.*

rejoice, and everything live (Ezek. 47: 9). This was also the especial gift of the Son (see chap. 1: 43), in whom the promises of the Father are fulfilled (2 Cor. 1: 20). Had the woman known God's gift, known also that the Dispenser of this gift stood before her, she would have been the petitioner, and He, with no delay and without upbraiding, would have given her living water.

Ver. 11. **She said unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?** In the answer of Jesus there was much to cause surprise, especially in the emphatic reference to Himself; but there was nothing in the actual terms used that compelled the hearer to seek for a figurative meaning. 'Living water' was a phrase in ordinary use in speaking of the fresh bubbling spring or the flowing brook. 'Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a spring of living water' (Gen. 26: 19, margin). Wherever running water is spoken of in the ceremonial law, the same expression is used. Hence nothing more than the fresh spring that supplied the well might at first be presented to the woman's mind, and that this precious gift came of the Divine bounty would be no unfamiliar thought. Though, as a Samaritan, she might know little or nothing of God's promise of His Spirit under this very emblem, or of Jeremiah's comparison of God Himself to a fountain of living waters (Jer 2: 13), yet reflection would suggest some such meaning. At present, however, she answers without reflection, and perceives no higher promise than that of the Creator's bounty, attended without the use of ordinary means.

Ver. 12. **Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?** It was from Joseph that the Samaritans were wont to claim descent; all the district around belonged to his children. But Jacob here receives special mention as the giver of the well. The well was his; he drank of it himself. Again the thought is forced upon us, that the Samaritan woman had sought this well partly on account of its connection with the fathers of her people. The feeling may have been tinged with superstition, but it was honorable in itself. The first part of her answer (ver. 11) showed how limited the range of the woman's thoughts still was: in the words of this verse we see her dawning conviction of the Stranger's greatness, and the impression made upon her by His manner and His words.

13 and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her,
Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst
14 again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I
shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that
I shall give him shall become in him a well of water,
15 springing up unto eternal life. The woman saith
unto him, [1] Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not

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[1] Or, *Lord.*

Ver. 13. **Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again.** The question receives no direct reply: the greatness of the Giver must be learnt from the quality of the gift. Even the living water from Jacob's well has no power to prevent the return to thirst.

Ver. 14. **But whosoever hath drunk of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of springing water, unto eternal life.** The living water of which Jesus speaks becomes in him who hath drunk of it a perennial fountain,—a fountain of water that is ever springing up in freshness and life, of water that not only is itself living, but that brings and gives eternal life. As before, this 'water' is the Holy Spirit. The whole thought closely approaches that of chap 7: 38. There the promise is, that out of him who comes unto Jesus that he may drink, who believes in Jesus, there shall flow rivers of living water; 'And this spake He of the Spirit.' The Holy Spirit is the special gift of Jesus; and, reciprocally, it is through the Holy Spirit that the believer remains united to his Lord in an abiding fellowship (chap. 16: 14, 15), and that Jesus lives in him (chap. 17: 23). These truths of the later discourses are really present here: Jesus, who first gives the living water, becomes in him that hath received it the fountain which supplies the same stream of life forever. The end is life eternal, not attained in the remote future, but begun and actually present in every one who has received the water that Jesus gives; for all those to whom the Spirit is given experience that unity with God which is eternal life (see the note on chap. 3: 14.)

Ver. 15. **The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.** These are words of simple earnestness. In the mysterious words of the Jewish traveler one thing was plain,—instead of the water she came to draw, water was offered that would satisfy thirst now and for ever. Could she gain this gift, one would no longer need to traverse the distance from Sychar to Jacob's well. Though much nearer than Shechem El-Askar is perhaps three-quarters of a mile from the well. The later narrative makes it impossible for us to regard this answer as one either of flippancy or of dulness of spiritual

16 neither come all the way hither to draw. Jesus
saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hith-
17 er. The woman answered and said unto him, I
have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst
18 well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five hus-
bands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy hus-
19 band: this hast thou said truly. The woman saith

perception. It is in every way more probable and true to nature to consider it as the expression of a bewildered mind eager to receive such a gift as has been offered, little as she could comprehend of what nature the gift could be. If we are right in the conjecture that other than common motives brought her to the well (see the note on ver. 12), it is still easier to understand her reply. With this verse comp. chap. 6: 34.

Ver. 16. **He saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.** The promise Jesus has given is one of satisfaction,—a promise, therefore, which cannot be understood or fulfilled till the want has been clearly apprehended and felt. These sudden words are designed to produce this effect. He who ever 'discerned what was in the man' with whom he spoke, well knew what answer His words would call forth.—Her past life and her present state proclaimed guilt and disappointment, carnality and wretchedness; all this she must recognize and feel before His gift can be hers.

Ver. 17. **The woman answered and said, I have no husband.** The effect is produced. The woman's words are a genuine confession,—an acknowledgment, perhaps of wretchedness, certainly of guilt.—**Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.** He accepts the truthfulness of her statement, but shows her how fully her life is known to Him. In this answer the emphasis lies on '*husband;*' the woman's words are repeated with their order changed 'I have no husband.' 'Well saidst thou, *Husband* I have not.'

Ver. 18. **For thou hast had five husbands.** The 'five' were no doubt lawful husbands, from whom she had been separated either by death or by divorce. **And he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this thou hast said truly.** In contrast with the lawful marriages is set the present unlawful union with one who was no husband. Her life was sinful: in what degree we cannot learn from this brief statement. An age in which divorce was freely allowed cannot be judged by the same rules as one of stricter principles. Whatever may have led her to an evil life, it is plain that her heart was not yet hardened.

Ver. 19. **The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.** Nothing can be more misleading than the idea that she is seeking to turn the conversation from an unwelcome sub-

unto him, [1] Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye
say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought
21 to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe
me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain,

[1] Or *Lord.*

ject, or to lead it to other topics than herself. Her answer is rather a fresh illustration of her inquiring and earnest character, notwithstanding all the sinfulness of her life. When her delighted wonder has found expression in her immediate acknowledgment, 'Sir, I behold that thon art a prophet,' she eagerly lays before Him a question which to her was of all questions the most important.

Ver. 20. **Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men must worship.** 'This mountain' is of course Gerizim, near the foot of which they were standing. With this mountain was connected, as she believed, all the religious history of her nation; for in the very Scriptures which the Samaritans possessed (the Pentateuch) the name of Gerizim had been inserted in the place of the holy city of the Jews. She could point to the sacred spot on which their temple had stood, then and in all succeeding ages up to our own time pre-eminently 'holy ground.' Her question was not prompted by mere curiosity or an interest in the settlement of an ancient controversy. It was a question of life and death to her. The claim of the Jews was exclusive. Not only 'ought' men to worship in Jerusalem, but that was the place where men *must* worship,—the only true holy place. One cannot but think that their confident and consistent maintenance of this first principle had long disturbed her mind; and when she saw in the Stranger one who could declare God's will, she eagerly sought for the resolution of her doubt. As long as she knew not with certainty where was God's true altar, she had no means of satisfying her religious wants. That her national pride had not stifled every hesitation on such a point as this plainly attests her earnestness. It is no ordinary candor that can look on the supremacy of Gerizim or Jerusalem as an open question. Her words imply a willingness to accept the revelation of the truth, whatever it may be, if only she can learn where with acceptance she may appear before God.

Ver. 21. **Jesus saith unto her, Believe me, woman, an hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.** The woman can hardly have doubted that the decision of a Jewish prophet would be in favor of Jerusalem, but the answer of Jesus sets aside all ideas of sanctity of place. With neither of these two most hallowed spots shall the thought of true worship be bound up. In saying 'an hour cometh,' Jesus shows that He is not repeating a truth belonging to the revela-

22 nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews.

tion of the past, but is proclaiming a new order of things. Yet the chief characteristic of the new order is, after all, not the equality of places where men worship, but the clear knowledge of the Being to whom worship is paid: from this the former flows. Samaritans shall offer worship in spite of Jewish exclusiveness, for they shall worship *the Father.* 'Israel is my son, even my first-born,' were God's words to Pharaoh; but now He offers the name to all, and the words of Jesus imply the abolition of every distinction, not of place only but of nation, in the presence of God, and for the purpose of true worship.

Ver. 22. **Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know.** The two questions at issue between Jews and Samaritans were those of holy place and holy Scripture. The former, though of far inferior importance (as the Jews themselves were by their 'dispersion' being gradually trained to know), was the more easily seized upon by national prejudice and zeal. Of this question Jesus has spoken. He passes on immediately to the other, which the woman had not raised, but which was of vital moment. The Samaritans did really worship God,—there is no slur cast on the intention and aim of their worship; their error consisted in clinging to an imperfect revelation of Him, receiving Moses but rejecting the prophets. Hating and avoiding Jews, they cut themselves off from the training given by God to that people through whom His final purposes were to be made known to the world. It was the essential characteristic of the whole of Jewish history and prophecy that it gradually led up to the Messiah; that the successive prophets made known with increasing clearness the nature of His kingdom; and that every one who could understand their word saw that the Divine purpose to save the world was to be accomplished through One arising out of Israel. He who knew not God as *thus* revealing and giving salvation did not really know him. Every Jew who truly received and understood the oracles of God committed to his trust (Rom. 3: 2) might be said to 'know' the object of his worship; and it is because our Lord is speaking of such knowledge,—knowledge respecting God given by the Scriptures which the Jews possessed,—that He says 'that which we know,' not 'Him whom we know.' The Samaritans then worshipped that which they knew not,—in this more enlightened than the Athenians who built an altar to an unknown God, but inferior even to those of Israel who had 'a zeal of God but not according to knowledge,' and standing far below those meant by our Lord when He says '*we* worship,' —we, namely, who have really appropriated Israel's inheritance of truth and hope —**Because the Salvation is of the Jews.** 'The Salvation' is that foretold in Scripture, and long waited for. The words are those of Jesus; but, remembered and quoted as they are by the Evangelist, 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: [1]for such doth the Father seek to be his wor-

[1] Or, *for such the Father seeketh.*

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they show how unfounded is the charge sometimes laid against this Gospel, that it is marked by enmity to the Jewish people. It is only when 'the Jews' have apostatized and rejected Jesus that the term becomes one of condemnation, designating the enemies of all goodness and truth.

Ver. 23. **But an hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.** This verse links itself with both the preceding verses 21 and 22. To no place of special sanctity shall worship belong: though 'the salvation is of the Jews,' this involves no limitation of it to the Jewish nation: on the contrary, an hour cometh when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. 'An hour cometh' had been said before by Jesus (ver. 21), but He could not then add 'and now is;' for, till the truth set forth in ver. 22 had been received, Samaritans could not truly worship 'the Father.' Now, however, they and all may do so. But the added words 'and now is' imply still more than this. Following the declaration that the Messianic salvation comes from among the Jews, they are no obscure intimation that, in Himself, the hour so long waited for has arrived, and thus they at least prepare for the direct announcement to be made in ver. 26. The word 'true' here is that which has been already spoken of (see note on chap. 1: 9, the only place before this in which it has as yet occurred) as so common and so important in this Gospel. The worshippers denoted by it are not merely sincere, free from all falsehood and dishonesty; they offer a worship that deserves the name, that fully answers to the lofty, noble, pure idea that the word 'worship' brings before the mind. In the day now dawning on the world such worshippers as these will worship the Father *in spirit and truth.* It is difficult to exhaust the meaning of these words, but we must start from the two thoughts of the verses which immediately precede: the first and chief points in the interpretation are,—not in sacred place but in spirit (ver. 21), not in imperfection of knowledge but in truth (ver. 22). The very name by which Jesus indicates the object of all worship, 'the Father' (a name no longer used of a chosen *nation*, but offering to *each man* a *personal* relation to God), had prepared the way for the abolition of all limitations of place: the teaching is completed here, when man's spirit is declared to be the 'hallowed ground' where he may approach his Father and his God. Again, in the past all knowledge of God had been imperfect,—not merely as our knowledge of the Infinite must be limited, but also in comparison with what may be known by man. Even Jews who held the oracles of truth saw in them as 'in a mirror darkly;' Samaritans who rejected the words of the prophets were far more ignorant. The law had been but a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things (Heb. 10: 1); type and figure concealed whilst they revealed the future blessings. But 'the hour now is' when the truth of God is revealed, —'truth' as well as 'grace' has come (chap. 1: 17); and (in the full knowledge of it) worship may now be offered to the Father. Read in connection with other parts of our Lord's teachings, the words 'spirit and truth' express much that could not be apparent at the moment when they were spoken. The Son appearing as the revealer of the Father, Himself the Truth, Himself giving to men the Holy Spirit who alone can hallow man's spirit as the sanctuary of worship,—all these are thoughts which cannot but press on us as we read this verse.—**For the Father also is seeking such, them that worship him.** The hour of this real worship is already come, *for* the Father also is seeking such real worshippers. They are offering Him real homage, for He on His part is seeking them: His seeking—through His Son, come to save (ver. 23), and to seek that He may save (Luke 19: 10)—explains and renders possible this worship. The original in this clause is usually explained to mean *either*, 'The Father seeketh that His worshippers be such' (*i.e.*, that they should worship in spirit and truth), *or*, 'For such the Father seeketh to be His worshippers.' Both interpretations involve serious difficulties, partly of language, partly of meaning. On the whole, the translation given above seems most probable, but its force is not at once apparent. There is a curious variation in the Greek words, which is often considered accidental, or at all events too minute to be significant, but which we must regard as intentional and important. In ver. 21 and in the first part of 23 the word 'worship' has its usual construction, but in this clause the case which follows the verb is suddenly changed, and a very unusual construction is introduced. We may represent the force of the word as it is commonly used by 'offer worship to:' but as used in the clause before us and in ver. 24, the connection of the verb with its object becomes more direct and close. An English reader can feel the force of a sudden transition from 'offering worship to the Father' to 'worshipping the Father.' The former may or may not be real and successful, and may be used of a lower as well as of the highest homage; the latter implies actual attainment of the end desired,—reaching Him in worship, if we may so speak; and thus it may almost be said to contain in itself the qualifying words of the preceding clause, for the '*real*' offering of worship to God is equivalent to worshiping Him. If this view is correct, and we are persuaded that such a writer as John could not so vary the language without design, the meaning of the clause is: For also the Father is now seeking such men,—those, namely, who actually worship Him. There is thus a mutual seeking and meeting on the part of the Father and His children.

24 shippers. [1]God is a Spirit: and they that worship
25 him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman

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[1] Or, *God is a spirit.*

Ver. 24. **God is spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.** Such worship as is described in the last verse is the only real worship that can be conceived. This verse does not say what men must do, in the sense of what men *ought to do.* It is the nature of worship in itself that is described. No other worship than that which is offered in spirit and truth can possibly be actual worship of God (the same idea is here expressed as in the last clause of ver. 23), because 'God is spirit.' We must not render these words 'God is a spirit,' for it is not personality that is spoken of, but abstract being, the nature of the divine essence. Since the spiritual presence of God is everywhere, Gerizim and Jerusalem lose all claim to be the special places for His worship. Not the outward action of the worshipper, not the forms he uses or the gifts he brings, but his spirit alone can be brought to meet the spiritual presence of God. Where this is done, God Himself meets the spirit which He has sought and prepared, and to which He has made known the truth lying at the foundation of all worship, the truth which reveals Himself. In this wonderful passage are concentrated many of the most essential truths of New Testament teaching, The historical development of God's plan, the preparation for Christianity made by Judaism, the idea of progress from the outward to the inward, from the sensuous to the spiritual (comp. 1 Cor. 15: 46), the independence of forms which marks the essence of religion, and yet its freedom to clothe itself in form so long as the spirit is not lost,—these are the lessons taught here; and however special the form in which they are presented, they are in perfect accord with the whole course of New Testament doctrine. The main principles of these verses would be understood by the woman to whom our Lord was speaking. But a day in which such principles should be realized must surely be that for which Samaria as well as Judea was waiting,—the 'latter days' of Messiah's advent.

Ver. 25. **The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (who is called Christ).** There is nothing surprising in her avowal that a Deliverer was looked for. We know from other sources that this was, and still is, an article of the Samaritan as of the Jewish faith; from age to age this people had waited in expectation of 'the Converter,' or 'the Guide.' But the use of the Jewish name 'Messiah' is more remarkable. We might suppose that it pointed to an approach towards Jewish faith and thought effected in this woman's heart by the teachings of Jesus, were it not that ver. 29 seems to show that the name was understood by Samaritans in general. Yet it could hardly be otherwise. Separated as the nations were, the famous name which the Jews universally applied to the Deliverer, for whose coming both peoples alike were waiting, would na-

saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare
26 unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

27 And upon this came his disciples; and they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why speakest thou

turally be known far beyond the limits of Judæa. The explanatory parenthesis, 'who is called Christ,' was no doubt added by the Evangelist, who afterwards (ver. 29) translates the word without any mention of the Hebrew form.—**When he is come, he will tell us all things.** There can be little doubt that the Samaritan hope was mainly founded on the great passage in the Pentateuch, Deut. 18: 15–18 (see note on chap. 1: 21). The language here used, 'He will tell us all things,' at once reminds us of Deut. 18: 18, 'He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.' The dependence of the Samaritans on the Pentateuch alone would naturally lead to their giving prominence to the prophetic aspect of the Coming One, so emphatically presented in this passage of the Law, rather than to the aspects under which the Deliverer is viewed in the later books of the Old Testament. The woman's words, indeed, may not convey her whole conception of Messiah, for the context has pointed only to revelation and teaching; but it is more than probable that many elements of the Jewish faith on this subject would be unknown in Samaria. If, however, the Samaritans expected less than the fuller revelation warranted, they at least escaped the prevalent Jewish error of looking for a Conqueror rather than a Prophet, for a temporal rather than a spiritual King.

Ver. 26. **Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.** She has sought and found the truth. The hope rising in her heart receives full confirmation; and a revelation not yet so clearly and expressly given by Jesus to Israel is granted to this alien, whose heart is prepared for its reception.

Ver. 27. **And upon this came his disciples; and they marvelled that he talked with a woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?** To talk with a woman in public was one of six things forbidden to a Rabbi. As the disciples were returning from the village, they wonderingly descry their Master thus engaged. Their surprise, no doubt, found expression in these very questions (asked among themselves) which the Evangelist speaks of as not addressed to their Lord. 'What seeketh He? what can He be in quest of that we cannot furnish?' or, if He is not seeking anything, why is He talking with a woman?' The questions uttered to one another they would have at once addressed to Jesus, but awe checked their impulse to speak.

28 with her? So the woman left her waterpot, and went
29 away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a
man, who told me all things that *ever* I did: can this
30 be the Christ? They went out of the city, and were
31 coming to him. In the meanwhile the disciples
32 prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said unto

Something in His look may have restrained them; or the eager wondering attitude of the one, and the solemn earnestness of the Other, proclaiming the willing hearer and the earnest Teacher, may have forbidden them to interrupt such intercourse.

Ver. 28. **The woman therefore left her waterpot, and went her way into the city.** 'Therefore,'—because, the conversation being interrupted, there was nothing to restrain her impulse to make known the marvels she had heard. In her eagerness she leaves her waterpot behind: the 'living water' has banished the thought of that which came from Jacob's well.—**And saith to the men**, whom she would naturally meet on the roads and in the streets.

Ver. 29. **Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did.** She fixes on the wonderful knowledge which the Stranger had displayed: what had impressed her must also convince them. Let them come for themselves, not rest on her testimony: and let them draw their own conclusions.—**Can this be the Christ?** Her own belief she expresses in the form of problem to be solved; and every reader must feel how natural and wise was her procedure. To have declared herself convinced that the Stranger was the Christ would have done little towards persuading the men of her own village: even to have quoted the declaration which Jesus made might have been without effect upon those who had seen or heard nothing to authenticate such words.

Ver. 30. **They went out of the city, and were on their way unto him.** This verse is here introduced partly to show the immediate success of the woman's message (no slight evidence of the preparedness of Samaria for the gospel), and partly to make plain the words of Jesus in a later verse (ver. 35).

Ver. 31. **In the meanwhile the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat.** Remembering His exhaustion with the journey (ver. 6), they begged Him thus to take advantage of this interval of rest.

Ver. 32. **But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not.** Literally, I have an 'eating' to eat. The word for 'meat' in ver. 34 is different from that used here, which rather denotes the meal, the partaking of the food, than the food itself. This 'eating' the disciples 'knew not.' The common rendering entirely obscures the meaning: our Lord does not say 'know not of,' but 'know not,'—ye have no experience of it. As yet, they had not learned the

33 them, I have meat to eat that ye know not. The
disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man
34 brought him *aught* to eat? Jesus saith unto them,
My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and
35 to accomplish his work. Say not ye, There are yet
four months, and *then* cometh the harvest? behold, I
say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the
36 fields, that they are [1] white already unto harvest? He

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[1] Or, *white unto harvest. Already he that reapeth, &c.*

power of such work as His (the complete fulfilment of His Father's will, ver. 34) to satisfy every want.

Ver. 33. **Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?** Their perplexity is like that of the woman of Samaria in regard to the living water (ver. 11).

Ver. 34. **Jesus saith unto them, My meat is that I should do the will of him that sent me, and accomplish his work.** This is the first of many similar sayings in this Gospel (5: 30, 6: 38, 7: 18, 8: 50, 9: 4, 12: 49, 50, 14: 31, 15: 10, 17: 4), expressing our Lord's perfect loyalty to His Father's will, and complete devotion to the accomplishment of His Father's work. The pursuit of this is not His joy, His purpose, His refreshment only, but His very food, that without which He cannot live. The 'will' to be 'done' may perhaps remind us of the action of the hour or the moment; the 'work' to be 'accomplished,' of the complete expression and fulfilment of the 'will.'

Ver. 35. **Say not ye,**—Has not your language this day been,—**There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?** As harvest began in the middle of April, it was now the middle of December.—**Lo! I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and behold the fields, that they are white for harvesting.** As in this chapter we have heard of a natural and a spiritual eating or drinking,—water (ver. 10), food (ver. 32),—so here, introduced with equal suddenness, we have the thought of a spiritual harvest. Yet, distant as must have seemed the harvest to the disciples when they looked upon the fields, far more distant would seem the day when Samaritans could be gathered into the garner of the Lord. But, lo! they are bid see, the fields are already white for harvesting. These words, we cannot doubt, were spoken by Jesus in sight of the Samaritans flocking towards Him (ver. 30); He saw the preparation of their hearts, the impression made by the woman's message, the faith which His own words would immediately bring forth; nay, He saw a harvest far more glorious than that of this day's labors, even that of the salvation of the world (comp. note on ver. 42).

Ver. 36. **Already he that reapeth receiveth reward, and**

that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto
life eternal: that he that soweth and he that reapeth
37 may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true,
38 One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap
that whereon ye have not labored: others have labored, and ye are entered into their labor.

**gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.** The figure is continued and amplified. Not only are the fields ready for harvesting, but the reaper is even now at work, and receiving his reward; and how glorious a reward! Not a lifeless store, but (as in the case of the springing water, ver. 14, and the eating that abideth, chap. 6: 27) fruit gathered for life eternal,—fruit that shall endure for ever in the fruition of the new life which Jesus brings. And all this takes place 'already' (the word even standing emphatically at the head of the sentence), that in the spiritual field—so quickly does the harvest follow the sowing of the seed—sower and reaper may rejoice together.

Ver. 37. **For herein is the word true, One soweth, and another reapeth.** For, in the spiritual field of which Jesus speaks, the familiar saying is true, has full reality (the word used signifying 'true,' as opposed not merely to what is false, but to all that is partial and imperfect),—that one has the labor of the sower, another the joy of the reaper.

Ver. 38. **I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not toiled: others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil.** The disciples are the reapers of this harvest; their commission—including, however, that of the disciples of Jesus throughout all time—was to reap a harvest which had not been prepared by their own toil. Whatever toil may be theirs, it is toil in *reaping*—in joyfully gathering the results of earlier toil. The surprise and gladness with which they would shortly witness the faith of the men of Sychar was an emblem of what should repeat itself continually in the history of the Church. While the disciples are reapers, this harvesting in Samaria shows clearly who is the sower, whose has been the earlier toil. The words point to Jesus Himself. From beginning to end of the narrative His 'word,' first in the conversation with the woman, and then as spoken to the Samaritans (ver. 39), is the instrument by which the joyful result is gained. Nor must we limit our thought of His 'toil' to what is related of the work of this evening by Jacob s well. The 'toil' that has made any harvest possible is that of His whole mission. All that was necessary that He might be able to say 'I am the Christ,' the self-renunciation and sorrow and pain of His atoning and redeeming work,—virtually included in His one act of acceptance of that work,—and present to His thought from the beginning,—is involved in His 'toil.' He says, indeed. '*Others have toiled*,' and neither here nor in chap. 3: 12 can we take the plural as simply

39 And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who
40 testified, He told me all things that *ever* I did. So
when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought
him to abide with them: and he abode there two days.
41 And many more believed because of his word; and
42 they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because
of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves,
and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the
world.

standing for the singular. He Himself is chiefly intended, but others are joined as having shared in the preparatory work. He had been alone in conversing with the woman of Samaria; but He had taken up and made use of all that she had received from the teaching of Moses (ver. 25), and all that the Jews had learnt from the prophets. Thus He includes with Himself those who had prepared the way for His coming. For Him, and therefore with Him, they had 'toiled;' but all His servants who come after Him find the field too prepared, the toil past, the harvest of that toil ready to be reaped.

Ver. 39. **And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the word of the woman, bearing witness, He told me all things that ever I did.** The arrangement of the words shows the prominence which John would give to the thought that many *Samaritans* believed in Jesus. Their faith, too, was only mediately called forth by the woman's word, for the Evangelist describes her by his favorite and most expressive term, as one 'bearing witness' concerning Jesus.

Ver. 40. **When therefore the Samaritans were come unto him they besought him that he would abide with them: and he abode there two days.** Mark the contrast between Judæa repelling and Samaria inviting: a dead and petrified orthodoxy may be more proof against the word of life than heresy.

Vers. 41, 42. **And many more believed because of his word: and they said unto the woman, No, longer because of thy speaking do we believe: for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.** Among those that heard the Saviour were evidently some who had first believed because of the woman's testimony ('*No longer* . . .'): hearing for themselves, they were led into a deeper faith.—There is nothing disparaging, as some have supposed, in the use of the word 'speech' or 'speaking' in regard to the woman's message: the expression is simply equivalent to *because thou speakest*, and relates to the fact of speaking, in contrast with the substance of the teaching,—the 'word' of Jesus Himself.—The last words in the

## CHAPTER 4 : 43–54.

### *Jesus in Galilee.*

43 And after the two days he went forth from

confession of the Samaritans (*this is indeed the Saviour of the world*) contain no real difficulty. The teaching of vers. 21-24 directly led to the recognition of this truth. It was much to realize that Jesus, as Messiah, was a Saviour, not merely a Prophet who would bring a revelation from God. But when the thought of a Saviour of Jews alone is once overpassed, there is no intermediate position between this and the conception contained in the words before us—a Saviour *of the world.* The Evangelist, in recording them, plainly intends to point out to us the special significance of the whole narrative: the conversion of Samaritans was a promise of the conversion of the world.

### *Jesus in Galilee. vers.* 43-54.

CONTENTS. This section of the Gospel brings Jesus before us in Galilee, in His intercourse with the Galileans, and in particular with the king's officer, who may be regarded as in a certain sense their representative. The object is still the same as that which we have traced from chap. 2 : 12. Examples have been given of the manner in which Judæa and Samaria submit to the words of Jesus, and these are now crowned by an instance of similar submission on the part of Galilee. The section divides itself into two subordinate parts—(1) vers. 43–45, introductory, after the manner of the introduction to the story of Nicodemus in 2 : 23-25, and of that to the visit to Samaria in 4 : 1–4; vers. 46–54, the account of the intercourse of Jesus with the king's officer.

Vers. 43, 44. **And after the two days he went forth thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself bare witness, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.** The connection between these two verses is a question on which the most different opinions have been held. The latter verse evidently assigns a reason why Jesus went into Galilee; and (we may add) ver. 45, which begins with '*When therefore,*' must be understood as stating that the welcome He received in Galilee was in full accordance with the motive of His action as stated in ver. 44. These two conditions of interpretation must evidently be observed, and yet in several solutions of the difficulty one or other of them is plainly set aside. Were we to judge only from what is before us, we should say that the words must mean: Jesus went into Galilee and not into His own country, for there He would be a prophet without honor; and so, when He came into Galilee, He was welcomed by the people. If such be the true sense, 'His own country' must be *Judœa.* This is certainly not the meaning of these words in the earlier Gospels, and hence the difficulty. A similar saying is recorded by every one of the three earlier Evangelists, and in each case it is introduced to explain the neglect of the claims of Jesus on the part of the inhabitants of Nazareth, the city *of*

44 thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified,
that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.
45 So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received

*Galilee* in which His early years were spent (Matt. 13 : 57 ; Mark 6 : 4 ; Luke 4 : 24). In one case, Mark 6 : 4, the saying is enlarged so as to apply especially to kindred, and not to country alone. If then we have rightly given the sense of these verses of John, it must follow that, though the saying quoted is nearly the same here as elsewhere, the application is wholly different. 'His own country' being in the one case Galilee (or rather Nazareth), and in the other Judæa. This is by many held to be impossible. But is it really so? Would not such a difference be in exact accord with the varied aims of the first three Evangelists and the fourth, as they respectively relate the Galilean and the Judæan ministry of our Lord? The saying is one that may be used with various shades of meaning. Used in relation to Nazareth, the proverb brings before us the unwillingness with which the claims of a prophet are listened to by those who have grown up with him, have familiarly known him, have regarded him as one of themselves. Used in relation to Judæa, the true home and fatherland of the prophets, the land which contained the city of Messiah's birth, the city associated with Him alike in ancient prophecy and in popular expectation (see chap. 7 : 41, 42), the words surely signify that a prophet is unhonored by those *to whom he is especially sent:* Jesus came unto His own country, and 'His own received Him not.' This interpretation then (which is that of Origen, in the third century) seems completely to meet the requirements of the passage. In Samaria Jesus had not intended to remain, and He must therefore either return to Judæa or go into Galilee; to Judæa He will not go, for the reason given ; He departs therefore into Galilee. There is only one objection, viz., that in vers. 1-3 of this chapter a somewhat different motive for leaving Judæa is assigned ; yet even there, though success in winning disciples is implied, it is said that He left the land because of the Pharisees. Our knowledge of the circumstances is imperfect, and, even in its utmost force, the objection is much smaller than those which lie in the way of the other interpretation of 'His own country.' For such as think that Galilee must be intended there are but two explanations possible: (1) Jesus went into Galilee, for there He would not meet with the honor of a true faith ; and there, consequently, He had a work to do, a mission to prosecute: when therefore He came into Galilee, although He was welcomed, it was from unworthy motives. (2) Jesus now at length went into Galilee, for (He had avoided Galilee in the belief that) a prophet has no honor in his own country: such honor, however, He has now won in Judæa, outside His own country ; when therefore He was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him.

Ver. 45. **When therefore he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things what-**

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him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 He came therefore again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain [1]nobleman, whose son was sick at Caperna-
47 um. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought *him* that he would come down, and heal his son: for
48 he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will

[1] Or, *king's officer.*

**soever he did at Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went unto the feast.** The 'feast' is no doubt the Passover of which we read in chap. 2; and the faith of these Galileans is precisely similar to that of the 'many' spoken of in ver. 23 of that chapter,—real, but not of the highest kind.

Ver. 46. **He came therefore again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine.** His coming revives the fame of that first miracle, and the report of His arrival quickly spreads.—**And there was a certain king's officer, whose son was sick at Capernaum.** This officer was probably in the (civil or military) service of Herod Antipas, a Tetrarch, but often styled a king (see Matt. 14: 1, 9; Mark 6: 14, etc.). The officer himself may have been in attendance on the court in Tiberias, but his son (probably an only son, as the Greek literally means 'of whom *the* son . . .') was lying ill at Capernaum.

Ver. 47. **When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.** The faith of this father rested on the miracles of which he had heard. Would Jesus but come down from Cana to Capernaum, his son also might be healed. But Jesus must always reprove the spirit which *requires* 'signs and wonders' before yielding faith; and He does it now.

Ver. 48. **Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.** The charge against the father is that his apparent faith is only thinly-veiled unbelief.—The words seem most suitably addressed to a Jew (comp. Matt. 12: 39, 16: 1; 1 Cor. 1: 22): on the other hand, the officer's connection with the court leads rather to the belief that he was a Gentile. As to 'signs,' see the notes on chap. 2: 11, 23. As a 'sign' is the highest, so a 'wonder' is the least noble name for a miracle. In so far as the miracle is a prodigy and excites amazement it is a 'wonder.'

49 in no wise believe. The [1]nobleman saith unto him,
50 [2]Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto
him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed
the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went
51 his way. And as he was now going down, his [3]ser-
52 vants met him, saying, that his son lived. So he in-
quired of them the hour when he began to amend.
They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the sev-

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[1] Or, *king's officer.* [2] Or, *Lord.* [3] Gr. *bondservant.*

Ver. 49. **The king's officer saith unto him, Lord, come down ere my child die.** The answer of Jesus, which had seemed perhaps to imply cold neglect, calls forth an impassioned appeal for pity and help; there were no moments to be lost,—even now the help may come too late. Jesus was but educating—refining and deepening—his faith.

Ver. 50. **Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.** Jesus does not need the passionate appeal: the prayer has been already granted. 'Thy son liveth' does not mean, 'is made to live now after thy second petition'; but, 'even while the word is in thy mouth, or before it was so, thy son liveth.' The meaning, in short, is not, I perform the cure at this instant; but rather, I have performed it, the work is done, thy son is recovered. He will not come to heal the child; there is no need that He should do so, the child is already whole. Will the father believe the word? He will, for his faith is purified and changed: it is now faith in the *word* of Jesus, though no sign or wonder has been seen.

Ver. 51. **And as he was now going down, his servant met him, saying that his son lived.** The word 'now' (or 'already') may appear superfluous, but it may possibly imply that some time had elapsed since the words of ver. 50 were spoken,—'when he had now begun the journey.' Business may have detained him for a few hours in Cana; and if it did so, it would be a testimony to the firmness of that faith with which he had now believed in Jesus. 'Going down,'—because Cana is situated in the hilly district, several hundred feet above the level of the Sea of Galilee.

Ver. 52. **He inquired of them therefore the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.** As the distance between Cana and Capernaum is not above five-and-twenty miles, it may seem strange that the officer should not have reached his home the same day. If the 'seventh hour' were reckoned from sunrise, the time of the cure would be a liittle later than noon; in that case it would be necessary to suppose that the servants were following the familiar Jewish reckoning of time, and regarding sunset as the

53 enth hour the fever left him. So the father knew
that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said unto
him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his
54 whole house. This is again the second sign that
Jesus did, having come out of Judæa into Galilee.

commencement of a new day. It seems, however, much more probable (see the note on ver. 6) that by the 'seventh hour' we must understand 6 to 7 P. M. Even without the supposition that the father had been detained in Cana, this will suit all the circumstances of the narrative.—The words 'began to amend' do not suggest any hesitation on the father's part as to the completeness of the cure. He had believed the word 'thy son liveth' (ver. 50), and what he asks now is as to the hour at which his child had been stopped upon the road to death, and turned back upon that to full health and strength.

Ver. 53. **So the father perceived that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.** Believed—that is, with a faith increased and confirmed: true faith he had manifested before. Many have supposed that this king's officer may have been Chuza, 'Herod's steward' (Luke 8: 3), whose wife Joanna was amongst those women who ministered of their substance to the wants of Jesus and His disciples.

Ver. 54. **This Jesus again did, as a second sign, having come out of Judæa into Galilee.** The order of the original is remarkable, and we endeavor to represent it by a translation which, if literal, is yet sufficiently idiomatical. 'This' stands alone; 'a second sign' is in apposition with it. There is thus by means of 'again' and 'second' a double statement as to the position of the miracle; and as we know that other miracles not numbered, were wrought in Galilee (chap. 6), and that there had already been 'signs' also in Judæa (chap. 2: 23), the two points upon which our attention is fixed seem to be—(1) that this miracle was wrought in *Galilee;* (2) that it was a *second* miracle there. The first of these points receives importance from the fact that the 'sign' now related was done after Jesus had left 'His own country,' rejected by 'His own' to be accepted by Galileans: the second magnifies the sign itself, for the mention of it as a 'second' appears to flow from the tendency of the Evangelist to give double pictures of any truth which possesses in his eyes peculiar weight. This is the case here. From the first Jesus showed that His mission was not confined to Judæa. It included Galilee, a province representative not of Jews only but of Gentiles, out of which the Jews thought that no prophet could come (7: 52): it was not a local but a universal mission. It is not necessary to discuss the question whether this miracle is identical with that related in Matt. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 2-10. We may wonder that such a question was ever raised. One point of similarity exists, in that in each case the cure was performed at a distance: in all other

## CHAPTER 5: 1–18.

### *Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.*

1 After these things there was [1]a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

[1] Many ancient authorities read *the feast.*

respects the narratives are wholly different,—agreeing neither in time, nor in place, nor in the station of the persons concerned, nor in the character of the faith evinced.

### *Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.* 5: 1–18.

CONTENTS. With the beginning of this chapter we enter upon the fourth and leading division of the Gospel, extending to the close of chap. 12. Its object is to set Jesus forth in the height of His conflict with ignorance and error and sin. More particularly, the Redeemer appears throughout it in the light in which He had already been presented in the Prologue, as the culminating-point and fulfillment of all previous revelations of God, whether in the Old Testament or in nature. In chap. 5 He is the fulfillment of the Sabbath, the greatest of all the institutions given through Moses. The subordinate parts of the first section of the chap. are—(1) vers. 1-9, the account of the miracle at the pool of Bethesda; (2) vers. 10-18, the opposition of the Jews, leading to the proclamation of the great truths contained in the second section.

Ver. 1. **After these things there was a feast of the Jews; And Jesus went up to Jerusalem.** No more is said as to the visit to Galilee than what we find in 4: 43-54. We are taken at once to the close of the visit, when Jesus went up again to Jerusalem. The occasion of His going up was the occurrence of a festival. Contrary to his wont, the Evangelist says nothing of the nature of the festival, merely adding (as in 2: 13, 7: 2, etc.) the words 'of the Jews.' Not a few Greeek manuscripts and other authorities endeavor to remove the difficulty by inserting the article, and reading 'the feast of the Jews,' an expression usually thought to mean the passover. The weight of evidence, however, is distinctly in favor of reading 'a feast;' and we may safely say that with this reading the Passover cannot be intended. Were it possible to believe that the great national festival is spoken of, the consequences would be important. In that case four Passovers would be mentioned in this Gospel (2: 13, 5: 4, 18: 28); and of one whole year of our Lord's public ministry the only record preserved would be that contained in the chapter before us. The critical evidence, however, sets the discussion at rest so far as the Passover is concerned, and we have only to inquire which of the remaining festivals best suits the few statements of the Evangelist bearing on this part of the history. Our two landmarks are 4: 35 and 6: 4. The former verse assigns the journey through Samaria to the month of December, the latter shows that the events recorded in chap. 6 took place in March or April; hence, in all probability, the festival of chap. 5 : 1 falls within the three or four months between these limits. If so, the feast of Pentecost (about May), Tabernacles (September or October), and the Dedication of the Temple (December) are at once excluded ; and no other feast remains except that of Purim, which fell about the month earlier than the Passover. This feast, therefore, is now generally believed to be the one referred to here. It is said that our Lord would hardly go up to Jerusalem for Purim. As to this, however, we are unable to judge ; in many ways unknown to us, that feast may have furnished a fitting occasion for His visit. Its human origin would not be an obstacle (comp. chap. 10 : 22), nor would its national and patriotic character. It is true that there were abuses in the celebration of Purim, and that excess and license seem to have been common. Still we cannot doubt that many devout Israelites would be occupied with thankful recollection of the wonderful deliverance of their nation commemorated by the feast, rather than with revelry and boisterous mirth. One other objection may be noticed. The feast of Purim was not allowed to fall on a Sabbath, and hence, it is argued, cannot be thought of here. But nothing in the chapter leads necessarily to the supposition that the Sabbath on which the miracle was wrought was the day of the feast. The feast was the occasion of our Lord's going up to Jerusalem : the Sabbath may have fallen soon after His arrival in the city ; more than this we have no right to say. If therefore we look at the historical course of the narrative, it would seem that, of the solutions hitherto offered, that which fixes upon Purim as the feast referred to in the text is the most probable. But there is another question of great importance, which must not be overlooked. Why did John, whose custom it is to mark very clearly the festival of which he speaks (see 2 : 13, 23; 6 : 4; 7 : 2; 10: 22; 11 : 55; 12 : 1; 13 : 1; 18: 39; 19: 14), write so indefinitely here? The feast before us is the only one in the whole Gospel on which a doubt can rest. The only reply which it seems possible to give is that the indefiniteness is the result of *design*. The Evangelist omits the name of the feast, that the reader may not attach to it a significance which was not intended. To John,—through clearness of insight, not from power of fancy,—every action of his Master was fraught with deep significance ; and no one who receives the Lord Jesus as he received Him can hesitate to admit in all His words and deeds a fulness of meaning, a perfection of fitness, immeasurably beyond what can be attributed to the highest of human prophets. Our Lord's relation to the whole Jewish economy is never absent from John's thought. Jesus enters the Jewish temple (chap. 2: 14) : His own words can be understood by those only who recognise that He Himself is the true Temple of God. The ordained festivals of the nation find their fulfillment in Him. Never, we may say, is any festival named in this Gospel in connection with our Lord, without an intention on the writer's part that we should see the truth which he saw, and behold in it a type of his Master or His work. If this be true, the indefiniteness of the language here is designed to prevent our rest-

2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew [1]Bethesda, having

[1] Some ancient authorities read *Bethsaida*, others *Bethzatha*.

ing on the thought of this particular festival as fulfilled in Jesus, and to lead to the concentration of our attention on the *Sabbath* shortly to be mentioned, which in this chapter has an importance altogether exceptional. Were it possible to think that the 'feast' referred to was the Sabbath itself, all difficulties would be at once removed.

Ver. 2. **Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-pool the pool which is surnamed in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porticos.** The use of the present tense, *there is*, may seem to indicate that the pool still remained after the destruction of Jerusalem; unless indeed we adopt the opinion that, as John in all probability committed to writing very early his recollections of his Lord's discourses and works, an incidental mark of his practice is left us in this verse.—The translation of the words that follow is much disputed. The Greek word for 'pool' may be written in two ways. That which is usually adopted gives the meaning, 'there is by the sheep . . . . a pool, that which is surnamed,' etc.; and the question is how the ellipsis is to be filled up. There is no authority for supplying 'market,' as is done in the Authorised Version; and that method of supplying the blank is now generally abandoned. The idea of most writers on the Gospel is that the 'sheep-gate' (Neh. 3: 1, 32; 12: 39) is intended, but we have found no example of a similar omission of the word 'gate.' We are thus led to examine the other mode of writing the Greek word 'pool,' from which results the translation, 'there is by the sheep-pool the *pool* that is surnamed;' and to this rendering of the sentence there appears to be no valid objection. It may, indeed, seem strange that the situation of the pool called Bethesda should be defined by its proximity to another pool about which no information is preserved; but in questions relating to the topography of Jerusalem arguments from the silence of historians are not worth much. Early Christian writers also (Eusebius and Jerome) do actually speak of a sheep-pool in Jerusalem in connection with this passage. Ammonius tells us that the pool was so called from the habit of gathering together there the sheep that were to be sacrificed for the feast: similarly Theodore of Mopsuestia. And it is very interesting to notice that an early traveler in the Holy Land (about the first half of the fourth century) speaks of '*twin pools* in Jerusalem, having five porticos.' We conclude therefore that John defines the position of the pool with which the following narrative is connected by its nearness to another pool, probably of larger size, and at that time well known as the 'sheep-pool.' It is remarkable that of the other pool the proper name is not mentioned, but only a Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic *second* name or *surname*. Several forms of the name are given in Greek manuscripts and other authorities. If we assume that Bethesda is the true form, the most probable explanation is 'House of grace.' It is

3 five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that
5 were sick, blind, halt, withered.[1] And a certain
man was there, which had been thirty and eight

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[1] Many ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part, *waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden.*

easy to see that such a name might naturally arise, and might indeed become the common appellation amongst those who associate a beneficent healing power with the waters of the pool; and it is also easy to understand how it was the second name that lingered in John's thought,—a name which to him bore a high significance, recalling the 'grace' which came through Jesus Christ (1: 17), and of which a wonderful manifestation was made at this very spot. The pool called Bethesda had five porticos; probably it was five-sided, and surrounded by an arched verandah or colonnade, closed in on the outward side. The hot springs of Tiberias are so surrounded at this day, and it is at least possible that the style of architecture may be traditional.

Ver. 3. **In these lay a multitude of sick folk, of blind, halt, withered.** Under the shelter of these porticos many such were laid day after day. The general term 'sick folk' receives its explanation afterwards as consisting of those who were blind, or lame, or whose bodies or limbs were wasted.—The omission of the remaining words of ver. 3 and of the whole of ver. 4 is supported by a weight of authority which it is impossible to set aside. The addition belongs, however, to a very early date, for its contents are clearly referred to by Tertullian early in the third century. It is evidently an explanatory comment first written in the margin by those who saw that the words of ver. 7 imply incidents or opinions of which the narrative as it stands gives no account. The well-intentioned gloss was not long in finding its way into the text; and once there, it gave the weight of the apostle's sanction to a statement which really represents only the popular belief. It will be seen that, when the unauthorised addition is removed, there is nothing in the text to support the impression that wonderful cures were actually wrought. The phenomena are those of an intermittent spring; and the various circumstances described, the concourse of sick, the eager expectation, the implicit faith in the healing virtue of the waters and in the recurring supernatural agency, find too many parallels in history to make it necessary to suppose that there was any supernatural virtue in the pool. It may be observed that the ordinary translation of the added words is not quite correct. The angel's visit was not looked for 'at a certain season' (as if after some fixed and regular interval), but 'at seasons,' from time to time.

Ver. 5. **And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his sickness.** This sufferer (apparently one of the 'withered,' though not altogether destitute of the

6 years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying,
and knew that he had been now a long time *in that*
*case,* he said unto him, Wouldest thou be made
7 whole? The sick man answered him, [1]Sir, I have
no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into
the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth
8 down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take

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[1] Or, *Lord.*

power of motion) had endured thirty-eight years of weakness. How long he had been wont to resort to Bethesda we cannot tell: it may have been only for days or even hours.

Ver. 6. **Jesus seeing him lying there, and perceiving that he hath been now a long time in that case, saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?** The first movement is altogether on the side of Jesus: comp. ver. 21 ('whom He will'). His knowledge of the case is by direct intuition (comp. 2: 25), not, as we believe, the result of inquiry. In Matt. 8: 2 the leper's words to Jesus were, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,' and the answer was, 'I will.' Here the address of Jesus contains His 'I will,' for His question to the man is 'Dost thou will? if thou dost I do also.' Jesus has the will to heal him: does he answer this with a corresponding will, or is he like those to whom Jesus would have given life, but who 'would' not come to Him? (ver. 40). It will be observed that there is no broad separation made between bodily and spiritual healing. The man certainly understood the former, but we cannot limit the meaning of Christ's words by the apprehension of those to whom He speaks, and the subsequent narrative seems to imply more than the restoration of bodily health.

Ver. 7. **The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water hath been troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.** The man does not give a direct answer to the question 'Wilt thou?' but the answer sought is implied. He had the will, but he had not the power to do what he believed must be done before healing could be obtained. The very extremity of his need rendered unavailing his repeated efforts to be the first to reach the waters when the mysterious troubling had taken place. He had no friend to help, to hurry him to the pool at the moment when the waters were thought to have received their healing power.

Ver. 8. **Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.** The cure is performed in the most simple and direct manner. It is not said that Jesus laid His hands on him (Luke 13: 13), or that He touched him. He speaks: the man hears the voice of the Son of God and lives (vers. 25, 28, 29).

9 up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man
was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.
10 Now it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jews
said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and

Ver. 9. **And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.** The result is described in words which are a simple echo of the command. Whilst they testify the power of the healing word, they also bring into view the man's 'will' and 'faith,' as shown in his immediate readiness to obey the command of Jesus. Immediately he was made whole, and took up his bed (the mattress which laid upon the ground, had formed his bed), and walked.—**And it was the sabbath on that day.** The verses which follow show how important is this notice. As Jesus chose out this one sick man to be the object of His grace, so He of set purpose chose the sabbath day for the performance of the miracle.

Ver. 10. **The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day, and it is not lawful for thee to take up the bed.** The Jews—some of the rulers of the people (see note on 1: 19)—who had not been present at the miracle met the man as he departed carrying his bed. As guardians of the law they challenge him, and condemn the bearing of burdens on the sabbath. It is very important for us to determine whether in so doing they were right or wrong. Were they faithfully carrying out the letter of the law of Moses, or were they enforcing one of those traditions by which they destroyed its spirit? We have no hesitation in adopting the former view. The question must be decided apart from the miracle, of which at this moment the Jews seem to have had no knowledge. It is true that, even had it been known by them, their judgment would not have been altered; they would have equally condemned the healing on the sabbath (see Luke 13: 14), since there had been no question of life and death. When, too, they afterwards hear what has been done (ver. 11) there is no change in their tone and spirit; and our Lord's own reference to this miracle (chap. 7: 23) seems to show that, so far from convincing them, it had roused their special indignation. But at the point of time now before us the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath was not in question. They met a man carrying his bed in the streets of Jerusalem on the sacred day. The law of Moses forbade any work on that day; and the special enactments in the Pentateuch (the command to kindle no fire, Ex. 35: 3, and the judgment on the man who gathered sticks, Num. 15: 35) show how this law was to be interpreted. In Jer. 17: 21-23, moreover (comp. Neh. 13: 19), this very act, the bearing of burdens, is explicitly condemned. What could they do but condemn it? Would the same act be regarded otherwise in England at the present hour? One other consideration remains, and it is decisive. Our Lord's answer to the Jews (ver. 17) makes no reference to their casuistical dis-

11 it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. But he
answered them, He that made me whole, the same
12 said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. They
asked him, Who is the man that saith unto thee, Take
13 up *thy bed* and walk? But he that was healed wist

tinctions or to traditions by which the law was overlaid. It differs altogether in tone and spirit from the reproofs which we read in Luke 13: 15; 14: 5. Had their objection lain against the healing, we cannot doubt that they would have brought on themselves the like rebuke: here however they were right in holding the man's action, so far as they understood it at the moment, to be an infraction of their law.

Ver. 11. **But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.** Whether the man knew the Rabbinical saying that a prophet's command to transgress the letter of the law was to be obeyed, save in the case of idolatry, may be doubted; but the impression made on him by the majesty of Jesus was sufficient to guide his answer. Divine power had healed him: a command from One who wielded such power could not transgress the law of God.

Ver. 12. **They asked him, Who is the man who said unto thee, Take up, and walk?** The mention of the cure has no effect in leading them to suspend their judgment. It would indeed present to them a new transgression of the law; but they content themselves with passing it by, and laying stress on what they consider an undeniable breach of the very letter of the commandment. This complete indifference to the work of mercy plainly illustrates the hard-hearted malice of 'the Jews.'

Ver. 13. **But he that was healed knew not who it was.** We need not wonder that this man, unable to move from place to place, perhaps only recently come to Jerusalem, had no previous knowledge of Jesus.—**For Jesus withdrew himself, a multitude being in that place.** After his cure, too, he could hear nothing of his benefactor, for, to avoid the recognition and enthusiasm of the multitude (comp. chap. 6: 15), Jesus withdrew,—literally 'slipped aside,' became suddenly lost to sight.—Here, as always, the 'multitude' or mass of the people is to be carefully distinguished from 'the Jews.' The conflict between Jesus and the Jews has begun: all His actions deepen their hatred against Him. The 'multitude,' on the other hand, is the object of His compassion: from time to time they follow Him eagerly, however slight may be their knowledge of His true teaching and aims (6: 2, 15). In subsequent chapters we shall often have to call attention to the contrast between 'the Jews' and the 'multitude;' and it will be seen that some passages are almost inexplicable unless this most important distinction is kept clearly in view.

not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself
14 away, a multitude being in the place. Afterward
Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,
Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a
15 worse thing befall thee. The man went away, and
told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made
16 him whole. And for this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the

Ver. 14. **After these things Jesus findeth him in the temple courts.** Some time afterwards, probably not on the same day, the man is found in the temple courts. There is no reason to doubt that he had gone there for purposes of devotion, having recognised the Divine deliverance. Throughout the narrative he stands in strong contrast with the Jews, resembling in this the blind man of whom we read in chap. 9. —**And said unto him, Behold, thou hast been made whole: sin no longer, that some worse thing come not unto thee.** The words of Jesus imply much more than the general connection of sin and suffering; they show that in this case the sickness had in some way been the result and the punishment of sin. Yet sorer judgment will follow a return to the life of sin (Matt. 12: 45).

Ver. 15. **The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.** The Jews asked who had commanded him *to take up his bed*. The man's reply, given as soon as he had learnt the name of his Deliverer, was that Jesus had made him whole. The careful variation in the expression seems to repel the supposition that he gave the information through ingratitude or in treachery. Probably his motive was a sense of duty to those who, whatever might be their spirit, were constituted authorities who had a right to be satisfied as to all breaches of the law, with whom also would rest the decision whether he must bring a sin-offering to atone for his violation of the sabbath. Whilst, however, this may have been the man's motive, we can hardly doubt that John (who here uses a word, 'declared,' which with him often has a solemn significance) sees in the act a Divine mission. In his eyes the man is for the moment a prophet of the Most High, a messenger of warning, to the guilty Jews.

Ver. 16. **And for this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath day.** The man whose cure had been the occasion of the action taken by the Jews now passes from view. For the second time Jesus and 'the Jews' are brought face to face. He had appeared in the temple (2: 14) to put an end to the abuses they had permitted or fostered, and to vindicate the holiness of His Father's house. Then He offered Himself to Israel as the Son of God; He declared Himself the antitype of their temple, the idea of which (as God's dwelling-place) had its fulfilment

17 sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father

in Himself alone. As by supernatural influence on those who trafficked in the Holy Place He had then challenged the attention of the rulers of Israel, so now by a wonderful sign He fixed on Himself the eyes of all (7: 21). This time it is not on the temple that He lays His hand, but the law, the cherished commandment of the sabbath. It is not as one who with authority checks abuses which none could defend, though many derived gain, that our Lord now appears in Jerusalem: He comes as one who claims to be above the law, having the right, as Lawgiver, to set aside its letter. As the temple had its idea fulfilled in Himself, so was it with the sabbath. As to the Son of God God's house belonged, so to the Son of God belonged that Rest of God of which the sabbath was a type; and the sabbath cannot be broken by the Son of God. This is the light in which the following verses teach us to regard the whole narrative. The choice of the sabbath day for the miracle is the kernel of the paragraph. Had the Jews been teachable and free from prejudice, had they taken the miracle as the starting-point of their reasonings, they would have been prepared for hearing the ground of the claims of Jesus thus to regulate their law. 'How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?' (9:16) was in truth a convincing argument, and by yielding to its force they would have been led to Jesus as humble seekers after truth. But because He 'did these things,' wrought such works and showed that He would persevere with them, they became and continued to be His persecutors.

Ver. 17. **But he answered them, My Father worketh until now: I also work.** In three different ways does our Lord rebut the charge which His foes so often brought against Him, that He broke the sabbath. At one time He showed that it was not the law but the vain tradition that He set aside (Matt. 12: 11; Luke 13: 15; 14: 5); at another He declared Himself as the Son of man Lord of the sabbath, and taught that the law of the sabbath must be determined from its aim and object (Mark 2: 27, 28); here only does He take even higher ground. God rested from His works of creation on the seventh day; this day was hallowed and set apart for man's rest from labor,—a rest which was the shadow of the rest of God, and which was designed to remove from man everything that might hinder him from entering in spirit into that fellowship with God which is perfect rest. From the creation to this very moment the Father hath been working; in His very rest upholding all things by the word of His power, providing all things for His creatures, working out the purpose of His love in their redemption. 'My Father worketh until now,' with no pause or intermission: 'I also work.' He who can thus call God His Father finds in the works of His Father the law of His own works. No works of the Father can interrupt the sabbath rest: no works of the Son on earth can break the sabbath law. The 19th and 20th verses more fully explain what is expressed in these majestic words.

18 worketh even until now, and I work. For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

## Chapter 5: 19-47.

### *The Discourse of Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.*

19 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do

Ver. 18. **For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.** The Jews do not fail to see that the argument rested on the first words, 'My Father.' He who could thus speak, and who justified His works by the works of God, was calling God His own Father in the highest sense which these words can bear, and was claiming equality with God. It has been objected that, though the brief assertion of ver. 17 does really imply all this, it is not probable that so momentous an inference would have been drawn from words so few. But it is sufficient to reply that, whilst John gives to us the exact substance of the words of Jesus and the impression which they made upon the hearers we have no reason to suppose that *all* the words spoken are recorded. The meaning which we gather from those that stand written before us probably could not be conveyed by *spoken* words without repetition and enlargement. The thought of the condensation which must have taken place in the record of these discourses of our Lord is that which fully justifies the devout reader's effort to catch every shade of meaning and follow every turn of expression.—The answer Jesus has given does but repel the Jews. We are told what the persecution of ver. 16 meant,—even then they had sought His life, for now they sought *the more* to kill Him. From this point onwards we have the conflict that nothing could reconcile, the enmity of the Jews which would not and could not rest until they had compassed the death of Him who had come to save them.

*The Discourse of Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda.* Vers. 19-47.

Contents. The performance of the miracle of healing on the sabbath had roused the active opposition of the Jews to Jesus, and that again had led to the great declaration contained in ver. 17, in which Jesus announces His equality with God. This announcement only excites the Jews to greater rage; and Jesus is thus led, according to His custom in this Gospel, to present in still fuller and more forcible terms the truth by which their anger and opposition had been aroused. The discourse may be divided into three subordinate parts—(1) vers. 19-29, where, with a thrice repeated nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the

'Verily, verily' (the progress of the thought is pointed out in the Exposition), Jesus speaks of Himself as the Worker of the Father's works, the Revealer of the Father's glory; (2) ver. 30, a verse at once summing up what has preceded from ver. 19, and introducing the remainder of the discourse; (3) vers. 31-47, where Jesus passes from the 'greater works' that He does to the witness borne to Him by the Father, pointing out at the same time the true nature of the evil principles within the Jews which prevented their receiving that witness.

Ver. 19. **Jesus therefore answered and said unto them.** We have already found Jesus replying to those who did not receive His utterance of a truth by a repeated and more emphatic declaration of the very truth which they rejected (see 3: 5) So it is here. He had been accused of blasphemy in calling God 'His own Father' and making Himself equal with God. He solemnly reiterates His claim, and expresses with greater force the unity of His working with the working of God His Father.—**Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can of himself do nothing save what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these things the Son also in like manner doeth.** The connection of this verse with the preceding is of itself sufficient to preclude the interpretation which some have given,—that it has reference to the perfect obedience of the Son of man rather than to the essential oneness of the Son of God with the Father. The last words of the verse express the general positive truth that all the Father's works are done by the Son, and done by Him in like manner, while the mystery contained in them is not greater than that which is inherent in every statement relating to the Trinity. It is the Son's part to make the Father's works take the shape of actual realities among men. The Father's working and the Son's working are thus not two different workings. and they are not a working of the same thing twice. They are related to each other as the ideal to the phenomenal, as the thought to the word. The Father does not work *actually*; He works always *through* the Son. The Son does not work *ideality*; He works always *from* the Father. But God is always working; therefore the Son is always working; and the works of the Father are the works of the Son,—distinct, yet one and the same. From this positive truth follows the denial which comes earlier in the verse. The Jews had denounced Jesus as a blasphemer, had thought that He was placing Himself in lawful opposition to God. This is impossible, for the Son can do nothing of Himself; severance from the Father in action is impossible, how much more contrariety of action! The Son can do nothing of Himself,—can indeed do nothing save what He seeth the Father doing. The subordination of the Son, which subsists together with perfect unity, is expressed in the former half of the verse by the 'seeing,' in the latter by the order of the clauses. The whole verse is a translation of the truth expressed in the Prologue (vers. 1, 18).

20 Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that

Ver. 20. **For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.** The relation of the Son's acts to those of the Father has been connected with the figure of 'seeing:' the converse is here presented, as 'showing.' The Father 'showeth' what Himself doeth; the Son 'seeth.' The principle of the relation between the Father and the Son, out of which this communion springs, is 'love,'—an eternal and continuous and infinite love, the source of an eternal and continuous and perfect communion. The same English words have occurred before, in chap. 3: 35; but the original expression is not the same. We shall have occasion in several passages to notice the two Greek words in question, which, as a rule, must be rendered by the same English word, 'love.' Starting from the use of the words between man and man, we may say that the one (φιλέω) denotes rather the tender emotional affection, that the other (ἀγαπάω) is never dissociated from intellectual preference, esteem, choice. The one term is not necessarily stronger than the other. The latter may be more exalted, as implying the result of intelligence and knowledge; the former may be more expressive, as implying a closer bond and a warmer feeling. The first word is most in place when the two who are united by love stand more nearly on the same level, the second is commonly used when there is disparity. The former occurs thirteen times only in this Gospel; once of the Father's love towards the Son (here), and once of His consequent love to those whose who love the Son (16: 27); three times of the love of Jesus towards His disciples, and six times of their love to Him; the other two passages are 12: 25 ('he that loveth his life') and 15: 19 ('the world would love its own'). It does not occur in John's Epistles, and twice only in the Apocalypse (3: 19; 22: 15). On the other hand, the latter word occurs no fewer than thirty-seven times in John's Gospel and thirty times in his Epistles. In the Gospel it is used seven times of the love between the Father and the Son; once of the love of God to the world (3: 16), and three times of the Father's love to those who are Christ's; eleven times of the love of Jesus towards His own; nine times of their love towards Him, and four times of the mutual love of the disciples. In the remaining passages (3: 19 and 12: 43) it denotes preference or choice. The fitness of the employment of the two words is very clear in almost all these instances. The first class is that with which we are now concerned, both words being used to denote the love existing between the Father and the Son. The particular passages will be noticed as they occur, but the verse before us and chap. 3: 35 are sufficient to show clearly the general principle ruling this whole class. Here, as the context brings into relief the essential relation between the Son and the Father, that word is chosen which most befits the unity of their Being. In 3: 35, again, the context fixes our attention on Him whom God hath 'sent;' not the es-

himself doeth: and greater works than these will
21 he shew him, that ye may marvel. For as the

sence but the work of the Son is the leading thought,—not the Word 'in the beginning with God,' but the Only-begotten Son given that the world might be saved: the other word, therefore, is there used.—**And he will shew him greater works than these.** The word 'showeth' in the first part of the verse includes all time: here the future tense is used, not as pointing to a change in the relation of the Son to the Father, as if the 'showing' and the 'seeing' would in the future grow in completeness and intensity, but only because the eternal purpose of the Father for mankind is fulfilled in time, and because the Saviour is looking at successive stages of His work, as developed in human history.—The 'greater works' must not be understood to mean simply greater acts, more wonderful miracles, all that we commonly understand by the miracles of Jesus being rather comprehended under the word 'these.' Further, our Lord does not say 'greater works than this' miracle, but greater works than 'these:' and lastly, to compare one of the Saviour's miraculous deeds with another, to divide them into greater and less, is altogether foreign to the spirit of the Gospels. The key to the meaning of the 'greater works' is given by the following verses; they include the raising of the dead, the giving of life, the judgment.—**That ye may marvel.** The design of these greater works, of this higher and more complete manifestation of Jesus, is 'that ye may marvel.' 'Ye' as throughout this discourse, is an address to those who opposed Him, who would not come to Him who refused to believe His words. The meaning of 'marvel,' therefore, does not differ from that which we observed in chap. 3: 7: it is not the wonder of admiration and faith, but the marvelling of astonishment and awe.

Ver. 21. **For even as the Father raiseth up the dead and maketh to live, so the Son also maketh to live whom he will.** This verse begins the explanation of the 'greater works' which the Father 'will shew' unto the Son. In speaking of these, however, the present not the future tense is used, for some of them are even now present in their beginnings, though future in their complete manifestation. The first example of these works of the Father, which 'the Son also doeth in like manner,' is raising up the dead and making to live. Are the words to be understood in their ordinary sense, or are they figurative? This question can only be answered from the context. On one side ver. 25 is decisive, death being there used of a spiritual state, and not with a physical reference only. On the other hand, ver. 28 unquestionably speaks of the raising of the dead out of their graves. As, therefore, the verses which follow ver. 21 certainly contain an expansion and exposition of the first words of the discourse (vers. 17, 19-21), the general terms of ver. 21 must be employed in their widest sense, including *both* a physical and a spiritual resurrection and gift of life. This is the more natural, as the miracle

Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even
22 so the Son also quickeneth whom he will. For

of healing has been the fountain of the discourse, and we have seen that in such miracles of our Lord the physical and spiritual worlds are in a remarkable way brought together.—The work spoken of is divided into two parts, the raising and the giving of life. The former word 'raising' is that used in ver. 8 ('Rise'), and is the first part of the command which *then* gave life. It is the word rendered 'awake' in Eph. 5: 14, a passage which the verse before us at once recalls. Whether used literally or in reference to a spiritual resurrection, it denotes the first step in the process of 'making to live.' Either word might stand by itself to indicate the work: neither in 2 Cor. 1: 9, 'God which raiseth the dead,' nor in Rom. 4: 17, 'God who maketh the dead to live,' is an imperfect act described. But the description is more vivid here, as we see first the transition and then the completed gift. In the language of this Gospel, 'life' has so deep a significance that 'maketh to live' must not be limited to the *initial* 'quickening,'—it is the *whole* communication of the fulness of life. If this view be correct, we can find no difficulty in the omission of the word 'raiseth' in the second half of the verse. Once mentioned, it presents the work of giving life so vividly, that afterwards the one word 'maketh to live' is sufficient to bear all the meaning. So in ver. 8 and ver. 11. The command to the sick man had been, 'Rise and . . . walk:' when the result is described and the command related by him who has been healed, nothing is said of the *arising*, for it is included in the gift of life. God 'maketh alive' (Deut. 32: 39; 1 Sam. 2: 6): 'God hath given to us eternal life' (1 John 5: 11). However understood, whether physically or spiritually, this is the work of the Father; both in the physical and in the spiritual sense, it is also, we now learn, the work of the Son. In one respect the later part of the verse is not less but more detailed than the earlier. No one can doubt that 'whom He will' lies implicitly in the first words, but the thought is expressed in regard to the Son only; and the best illustration of it as applied to Him is given by the narrative itself. Amongst the crowd of sick Jesus chose out one especially wretched and consciously helpless, and bestowed on him the free gift of life. So (Matt. 11: 25) the wise and prudent are passed by, and babes are the objects of the Father's merciful will. The Son's will is the manifestation of the Father's purpose. There is no suggestion of an absolute decree. The cure of the sick man was to a certain extent dependent on his own will: 'Hast thou a will to be made whole?' (ver. 6). The same will to be quickened is necessary to all to whom the will to quicken on the part of the Son extends. What is the source of the will in them is a question not raised: enough that the light appears and they are attracted to the light and open their hearts to receive it.

Ver. 22. **For moreover the Father judgeth no one, but hath given all judgment unto the Son.** This verse must be

neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath
23 given all judgement unto the Son: that all may
honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

taken in connection with the 19th, 'The Son can of Himself do nothing save what He seeth the Father doing.' By thus connecting the two verses, it becomes plain that our Lord does not assert that judgment is not in a certain sense exercised by the Father, but that the Father has not reserved judgment to Himself,—that with all other things, it too is given unto the Son. The Father showeth the Son all things that Himself doeth: from this complete manifestation nothing is excepted, —not even that final arbitrament which is the prerogative of the Supreme. Hence there is no contradiction between this verse and ver. 30 below, where Jesus says, 'I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge;' nor will 8: 50 present any difficulty. By 'judgment,' as in chap. 3: 17, 18, 19, we must certainly understand a judgment that issues in condemnation: the parallelism between 3: 18, 'He that believeth in Him is not judged,' and ver. 24, 'He that heareth my word and believeth Him that sent me hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment,' is remarkably close. All judgment, future and present, the final award with all that foreshadows it, the Father hath given, by a bestowal which can never be revoked, unto the Son. The connection between the 22d and the 21st verses is now plain. The Son maketh to live whom He will; but there are some on whom He does not bestow life (compare ver. 40); them therefore He judges, He condemns,—for not even is this Divine prerogative withholden from Him; nay, all judgment hath been given unto the Son.

Ver. 23. **That all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.** These words express the purpose of the Father in giving all judgment to the Son. They remind us of the closing words of ver. 20, which also express His purpose, but there is a significant difference between the two verses. There we read, 'that ye may marvel,' here 'that *all* may honor:' there it is the confusion and amazement of foes, here it is the honor rendered by all whether foes or friends. It is true, indeed, that the 'judgment' of ver. 22 implies condemnation, and that, by consequence, this verse might seem to relate to foes only and not obedient subjects in the kingdom of God. But the 'all' is rightly introduced, for when judgment has compelled the honor of unwilling adoration, much more may it be expected that willing hearts will see the unity of the Father and the Son, and will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. **He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who sent him.** It was in their zeal for the honor of the Father, as they supposed, that the Jews refused to honor Him who was God's Son. But so truly one are the Father and the Son, that all who dishonor the Son dishonor the Father. The Father orders all things as He does that He whom He sent into the world may receive equal honor with Himself; and all who refuse honor to the Son resist the Father's purpose. Similar

He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the
24 Father which sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto
you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him
that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into
judgement, but hath passed out of death into life.
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and
now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the

words are found in one of the earlier Gospels (Luke 10: 16), yet no teaching is more characteristic of the fourth.

Ver. 24. **Verily, verily, I say unto you.** The second 'Verily, verily,' introducing the second step in the argument.—**He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.** This verse has a close connection with the last, the words 'Him that sent me' taking up the similar words in ver. 23; and these who by hearing Christ's words give honor to the Father being set over against those who were there spoken of as dishonoring the Father. But the verse has also a very important connection with the three preceding verses. They have stated the work of the Son *as it has been given Him by the Father;* this states the work *in its effect upon believers.* The comparison of the terms employed in the several verses is very instructive, and the *advance* from a principle asserted of the Son to the same principle viewed in its application to men is most perceptible. The Son maketh to live the dead, even those whom He will (ver. 21): he that heareth His word hath eternal life, and hath passed out of his state of death into life (ver. 24). All judgment is given unto the Son (ver. 22): into this judgment he that believeth does not come (ver. 24). There is special significance in the words 'believeth Him that sent me:' our Lord does not say 'believeth *in* Him,' for that which He has in view is the acceptance of God's testimony concerning the Son (1 John 5: 10). Such hearing and believing imply the full acceptance of Christ, and thus lead directly to that 'believing in the Son' which (chap. 3: 36) gives the present possession of eternal life. The believer has passed into a state to which judgment does not apply; he has received into himself that word which (chap. 12: 48) will at the last day judge all who reject it. Believing in Christ he has life in Him, and to all that are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation (Rom. 8: 1).

Ver. 25. **Verily, verily, I say unto you.** The third 'Verily, verily,' introducing the third step in the argument.—**An hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that have heard shall live.** What was said of ver. 24 applies here also; for this verse has a direct connection with that which precedes it ('heareth my words' rises into 'shall hear the voice of the Son of God'); and yet a still more important link unites it with the opening words of the discourse, es-

26 Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as
the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to
27 the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave
him authority to execute judgement, because he is

pecially with ver. 20. 'He will show Him greater works,' In the 21st and 22d verses, these works are looked at in their own nature as done by the Son; in the 24th verse, they are looked at in their effect on the believer. Now the 'will show' is brought into prominence, for it is of the *historical* fulfillment of those words that the verse before us speaks. 'An hour cometh' when the Son's power to give life to the dead (ver. 21) shall be manifested. Of the two spheres in which this power is exercised this verse has in view one only; the 'dead' are those who are spiritually dead. In regard to these alone could it be said that the hour has already begun ('an hour cometh, *and now is*'), or would the limitation in the last words be in place, '*they that have heard* shall live.' The general meaning therefore is the same as that of the last verse; but, as it is to 'the dead' that the Son speaks, we here read of 'the voice,' and not 'the word.' In saying 'the voice' of the Son of God,' Jesus recalls to our thought all the majesty of His first words (vers. 11, 17. 19).

Ver. 26. **For even as the Father hath life in himself; so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself.** The dead shall hear the voice of the Son and live, for the Son hath life and can impart life. This is the connection between verses 25 and 26. The Father who is the primal fountain of life gave to the Son to have life in Himself. As in verses 19, 20, 21, that which belongs to the Father and that which belongs to the Son are designated by the same words, while the subordination expressed in verses 19, 20, by the figurative words 'showing' and 'seeing,' is here (as in ver. 22) expressed by the word 'gave.' It is therefore the essential nature of the Son that is spoken of, and not His work in redemption—'To have life in Himself' is the loftiest expression that can be used: the unchangeable possession of life exactly similar and parallel to that of the Father, such possession as enables Him to be the Giver of life to others, belongs to the Son.

Ver. 27. **And he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is A Son of man.** The Son 'maketh to live,' but He maketh to live whom He will' (ver. 21), or (as we read in ver. 25), He giveth life to those who have heard His voice, and not to all. Where, then, He is not the Giver of life, He is necessarily the judge. The one though involves the other, both in verses 21, 22 and here. The Father who gave to the Son the possession of life gave Him judgment also. This we read in the 22d verse, but the truth now wears a new form; for, although the word 'gave' is repeated in ver. 27, it is in relation to a gift and a sphere altogether different from those of which the 26th verse speaks. *There* the essential attributes of the Son are before us, 28 [1] the Son of man.* Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall

[1] Or, *a son of man.*
* Substitute the marginal rendering for the text.—*Am. Com.*

including the prerogatives of the Word made flesh: *here* we read of a gift which belongs to time and not eternity, a gift which the Son receives 'because He is a son of man.' The former verses that speak of giving life and of judging (21, 22) may have an extent of application of which we know nothing; this verse relates to the judgment of *men* by One who is very man. Such is the force of the words 'a son of man.' In every other passage of this Gospel it is '*the* Son of man' of whom we read: here only, and in Rev. 1: 13; 14: 14, is the definite article wanting. No expression brings out so strongly the possession of actual human nature, and for this purpose it is employed. God's will is to judge the world by 'a man whom He ordained' (Acts 16: 31); and the verse before us, though comprehending much more than the last judgment, seems, as may be inferred from the peculiarity of the expression 'execute' or 'perform judgment' (literally 'do judgment'), and from the presence of this thought in the immediate context (vers.28, 29), to look especially towards the final scene. But the judgment is one that issues in condemnation, and it is the Father's will that 'a son of man' shall pronounce the sentence, as one who has taken on Himself human nature in all its reality and completeness, in all its faculties, affections, and feelings. Because He has done so, He is fitted to be a Judge of men, and to draw from the consciences of the guilty an acknowledgment of the righteousness of their doom. As the Son of God having life in himself, He gives life, and those who are united to Him by faith have possession of a life that is divine. But as a son of man He judges; as One who has been in the same position with those standing at His bar, as One who has fought the same battle and endured the same trials as they. Thus they behold in their Judge One who entirely knows them; His sentence finds an echo in their heart; and they are speechless. Thus it is that judgment becomes really judgment, and not merely the infliction of punishment by resistless power.

Ver. 28. **Marvel not at this.** Jesus has been speaking of works at which they may well marvel (ver. 20); but great as these may be, there is yet a greater.—**Because an hour cometh, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.** That the future alone is spoken of is clear from the omission of the words 'and now is' found in ver. 25. The resurrection is not spiritual and figurative, for the words are 'all that are in the graves,' not 'all that have heard,'—' shall go forth, not 'shall live.' The consummation of the work of Jesus is the general resurrection both of the righteous and the wicked. Now all shall hear His voice, to which before (ver. 25) some only had given heed. All shall go forth, but not all to a resurrection of life.

29 hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have [1]done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement.

30 I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is righteous; because I seek not

[1] Or, *practised.*

Ver. 29. **And they that have done good shall go forth unto a resurrection of life; but they that have committed evil unto a resurrection of judgment.** Those who have committed evil, whose deeds have not been the abiding fruit and work of the truth, but merely the repeated manifestation of evil in its vanity and worthlessness (see 3: 20), shall go forth to a resurrection to which belongs abiding judgment. And these alone come into judgment (compare ver. 24). As in 3: 18 it is said that 'he that *believeth in Him* is not judged,' so here, 'they that *have done good* shall go forth unto a resurrection of life.' The difference between the two passages is, that in the one the faith is named; in the other, the works which are the expression of the life that follows faith, the abiding fruit of faith. It will be observed that the expressions 'resurrection of life' and 'resurrection of judgment' denote *states*, not *acts*, of resurrection. No general *judgment*, therefore, is here mentioned: all that is spoken of is a general *resurrection*, on the part of some to a continuing life, of others to a continuing judgment.

Ver. 30. **I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just.** This verse is the dividing line of the discourse, belonging at once to both parts, summing up (to a certain extent) what has gone before, leading on to the new subject which occupies the remainder of the chapter. The last word spoken was 'judgment.' Jesus now returns to it, and it is not strange that He should do so. He is speaking in the presence of the Jews, His determined foes, who refuse life, whom He judges and cannot but judge. Hence this lingering on judgment, and the recurrence to the first thought of the discourse (ver. 19), so as to show that this judgment is not of Himself, but belongs both to the Father and to the Son.—The figure of ver. 19 is changed. There 'seeing' was the word chosen, as most in harmony with the general thought of works done; here it is of judging that Jesus speaks, and hence the same thought of communion with the Father is best expressed by 'hearing.' One characteristic of this verse is so marked as of itself to prove that the verse is closely related to those which follow. From the beginning of the discourse (ver. 19) Jesus has spoken of the Father and the Son. Now He directly fixes the eyes of His hearers upon Himself ('I can,' 'I hear,' 'I judge'); and this mode of speech is retained to the very end of the chapter.—**Because I seek not mine own will, but the will**

31 mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. If
32 I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. It
is another that beareth witness of me; and I know
that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.
33 Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness

**of him that sent me.** That His works have not been and cannot be against the authority and will of God, Jesus has shown by pointing out their essential unity with those of the Father (ver. 19). That the judgment He must pass is just, He has shown by the same proof, —'as I hear I judge.' But a second proof is now given, or rather (perhaps) a second aspect of the same truth is brought into relief, that thus His words of rebuke and warning may be more effectually addressed to the Jews. His action is never separate from that of the Father,—there can be no variance: His will is ever the will of His Father,—there can be no self-seeking. It was because the opposite spirit dwelt and reigned in the Jews that they were rejecting Him, and bringing judgment on themselves.—The transition to the first person, 'I,' 'my,' suggests an objection that would arise in the minds of the Jews. This is met in the verse that follows.

Ver. 31. **If I bear witness of myself concerning myself, my witness is not true.** The word 'I' is emphatic,—'if it is I that bear witness.' The words plainly mean 'I and I alone,' for no one is discredited because he testifies to himself, although he is not credited if *no other* witness appears on his behalf. The Jews may have understood Jesus to mean: If I have no other witness to testify concerning me, my testimony cannot claim to be received. But there is more in His words. In the consciousness of oneness with the Father, He would say that if it were possible that His own witness should stand alone, unaccompanied by that of the Father, it would be self-convicted, would not be true: He, in making the assertion, would be false, for He is one with the Father, and His statement, as that of one who was false, would be false also. He must therefore show that the witness He bore to Himself was really borne to Him by the Father: the Father's witness even the Jews will acknowledge to be true. To this, therefore, He proceeds.

Ver. 32 **It is another that beareth witness concerning me.** Not 'There is another,' as if He would merely cite an additional witness. He would lay the *whole* stress of the witnessing upon this 'other witness.' This witness is the Father,—not John the Baptist, who is mentioned in the next verse only that it may be shown that his testimony is *not* that on which Jesus relies.—**And I know that the witness which he witnesseth concerning me is true.** These words are not said in attestation of the Father's truth, a point admitted by all: they are the utterance of the Son's profound consciousness of His own dignity and union with the Father.

Ver. 33. **Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne wit-**

34 unto the truth. But the witness which I receive is
not from man: howbeit I say these things, that ye
35 may be saved. He was the lamp that burneth and
shineth: and ye were willing to rejoice for a season

**ness unto the truth.** As if He said: Had I not this all-sufficient witness,—were it possible for me to appeal to any human witness, I might rest on your own act. Ye yourselves have made appeal to John, and he hath borne witness to the truth (chap. 1: 19-27). Your mission and his answer are unalterable and abiding facts, which press upon you still and cannot be set aside. What he attested is the truth. Jesus does not say 'hath borne witness to me,' perhaps because that to which John bore witness was only a revelation from God (compare chap. 1: 34), a declaration of the truth which he had received from God; perhaps because the whole lesson of this passage is that there is only *one* real witness to Jesus, even the Father speaking in the Son and drawing out the answer of the heart to Him.

Ver. 34. **But not from a man do I receive the witness.** Great as was the witness of this greatest of prophets, yet John was only a man, and his witness therefore is not the real testimony to Jesus; it is a higher which is given Him, and which He receives (comp. ver. 36). Hence the definite article before 'witness.' **Howbeit these things I say that ye may be saved.** Insufficient as was John's testimony for the production of faith in its deepest and truest sense, yet Jesus had referred to it, recognizing its value as part of the Divine arrangements for leading men to Himself. It ought to have brought them to Jesus: and then, as they listened to His own word, the true and complete witness would have been given. The following words set forth more fully the true position of the Baptist, in his value and in his imperfection.

Ver. 35. **He was the lamp that burneth and shineth.** John's great work had been to bear witness of Jesus, to point to Him. By a sudden transition this is expressed very beautifully in a figure. As the Psalmist said of God's word that it was a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path (Ps. 119: 105), showing him the right path, preserving his feet from wandering, so does Jesus represent John's mission here. The lamp has been supplied with oil and has been lighted for a special purpose; it is not self-luminous, shining because it is its nature to give light. The lamp too burns as it shines; its light is transitory, and may well be so, because in proportion as its purpose is accomplished may the light diminish: when its end is answered, the lamp may be extinguished (comp. 3: 30). **And ye desired for a season to exult in his light.** Alas! for them the lamp failed to fulfil its purpose. Instead of learning the way to Jesus by its means, they thought only of the light itself. No doubt this light was beautiful and attractive, but it had been designed only to guide to Him who would prove 'the true light' unto all that followed

36 in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent

Him (chap. 1: 9; 8: 12). The Jews are evidently censured, but not (as some maintain) because they had exulted instead of mourning. There had been no call to mourning. The very exhortation to repentance, to prepare for the coming of Him for whom Israel had long waited, contained in it 'glad tidings of great joy.' The transient acceptance of John himself, instead of the acceptance of his message in its true and permanent significance, is the fault for which the Jews are here condemned.

Ver. 36. **But the witness that I have is greater than that of John.** Our Lord does not say 'I have greater witness than that of John, as if He was about to specify *additional* testimony of greater weight than the Baptist's. No, that testimony to the truth was good, was useful (vers. 33, 34), but 'the witness' which He has—the *only* witness to which He appeals—belongs altogether to another order, not human, but Divine. Other witness may prepare the heart, external testimony may point the way, but there is only one evidence offered by Jesus Himself.—**For the works that the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness concerning me, that the Father hath sent me.** The evidence is works that the Father hath given Him to accomplish; and these works are His evidence, not as external evidence merely, but because, as expressive of the Father in Him, they appeal to that inner light in men which ought to have led men to recognise the Father in the Son. Of these 'works' miracles are one part, but not the whole. In two other passages our Lord uses similar language to this, speaking of the 'accomplishment' of the work of the Father (chap. 4: 34) or of the work which the Father hath given Him to do (chap. 17: 4); and in both the work is more than miracles. True, we read in these of 'the work,' not 'the works,' but the difference is not essential: the many works are the many portions of the one work. Nor need we go beyond this discourse itself to see that the very widest meaning must be assigned to 'works.' The keynote is struck by ver. 17, which speaks of the 'working' of the Father and the Son; and in ver. 20 we read of the 'greater works' which the Father will show unto the Son. The 'works' then here denote all that has been referred to in earlier verses (20-30), whether present or future, the works of quickening, raising, judging, all that the Son does and will do until the purpose of the Father is accomplished and the redemptive work complete. These works, being manifestations of His own nature, are essentially different from all external testimony whatever. —Such as they are, they have been 'given' Him by the Father to accomplish: they are described not as a charge but as a *gift* (as in ver-

37 me. And the Father which sent me, he hath borne
witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at
38 any time, nor seen his form. And ye have not his
word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye be-

ses 22, 26, 27): and they are the very works which He is now doing and habitually does. Special significance attaches to these added words, 'the very works that I do,' for they show that the witness given by the Father to the Son is given in 'works' now presented to their view. Every word and every deed of Jesus is, as a work, bearing testimony to the truth that the Father hath sent Him; for, where the heart of the beholder is prepared, every work reveals the presence of the Father, and is manifestly a work of God.

Ver. 37. **And the Father which sent me, he hath borne witness concerning me.** As if Jesus said: And thus, in the abiding gift of the 'works,' it is the Father that sent me that hath borne witness of me.—'Hath borne witness' corresponds with 'hath given;' each points to the continued possession of a gift bestowed, the Father's abiding presence with Him whom He 'sent' and 'sealed' (chap. 6: 27). Hence we must not suppose that a *new* witness of the Father—'direct' (as some say), in contrast with the 'mediate' testimony of the works—is here intended. If the 'works' include the whole manifestation of the Son, the whole of the tokens of the Father's presence in Him and with Him, they are no 'mediate' testimony; no testimony can be more direct.—**Never have ye either heard a voice of him or seen a form of him.** The Father has borne witness, but they have not known His presence. In the words of Jesus He has spoken, and the ear not closed through wilfulness and unbelief would have recognised the voice of God. In the actions and the whole life of Jesus He has manifested Himself, and the spiritual eye, the man 'pure in heart,' would have 'seen God.' It had been otherwise with 'the Jews.' Whilst our Lord had been working in their midst they had heard no voice of the Father, they had seen no form of Him. This was a proof that they had never received in their hearts God's revelation of Himself. Had they done so, had they (to use our Lord's figurative language,—no doubt suggested by the thought of the words which He had spoken and the miracles which He had shown to them) ever been acquainted with the Father's voice, they would have recognised it when Jesus spoke: had the eyes of their understanding ever been enlightened so as to see God, they would have seen the Father manifested in their very presence in His Son. What is in these two clauses couched in figurative terms the next clause expresses clearly.

Ver. 38. **And ye have not his word abiding in you; because whom he sent, him ye believe not.** 'Word' here must not be understood as directly signifying the Scriptures of the Old Testament: it is rather the substance of God's whole revelation of Him-

39 lieve not. [1]Ye search the scriptures, because ye
think that in them ye have eternal life; and these
40 are they which bear witness of me: and ye will not

[1] Or, *Search the scriptures.*

self, however and wherever made. This revelation received into a believing heart becomes God's word in the man, and to this word answers the Word, in whom God has perfectly revealed Himself (compare Heb. 1: 1, 2) By all previous teaching concerning Himself God has prepared the way for man's reception of His Son He who did not recognise the Son as the Sent of God, showed by this very sign that the preparatory work had not been effected in him,—that he had not God's word abiding in his heart. So in the next chapter Jesus teaches that 'every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Him' (chap. 6: 45). The refusal therefore of the Jews to believe Him, that is, to accept His claims, is of itself a proof that they have had no spiritual aptitude for discerning the presence and the revelation of God. It will be seen that, as in the first clause of ver. 37 we cannot accept the view that a new witness is introduced, different from the works, so here we cannot believe that the 'voice,' 'form,' and 'word' are to be limited to the manifestation of God in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. No doubt this is the most prominent and important part of our Lord's meaning, but we must not exclude God's revelation of Himself in providence and in the heart of man, for in all things He had pointed to His Son. It should be mentioned that some have supposed the clause 'never have ye heard a voice of Him' to refer to the voice of God at the Baptism of our Lord. But such an interpretation is surely impossible. The tone of the two verses here is one of reproach; but that voice was not intended for the ears of the Jews, and their failure to hear it was no matter of rebuke. This explanation, too, would not diminish but increase the difficulty of the words 'or seen a form of Him,' words startling to every Israelite (compare Deut. 4: 12), and we believe, only to be accounted for when regarded as closely connected with and suggested by the words and deeds of Jesus.

Ver. 39. **Ye search the Scriptures.** The link connecting this verse with the last is the mention of God's 'word.' We have seen that our Lord had referred in a marked though not an exclusive manner to the Scriptures. To the Jews indeed it might seem that He intended to speak of these alone; and that He should deny Jews the glory which they esteemed most highly, by declaring that they had not God's 'word' abiding in them, would arouse their wonder and their wrath. Now, therefore, Jesus allows them the praise that was their due, but shows also that the very possession of which they boasted had been so used by them as to increase their condemnation.—**Because ye think that in them ye have eternal life: and it is they which bear witness concerning me.**

Ver. 40. **And ye will not come to me, that ye may**

41 come to me, that ye may have life. I receive not

**have life.** The Jews did search the sacred writings,—to do so was their honor and their pride. Their own belief was that in possessing them they possessed eternal life; as one of their greatest teachers said, 'He who has gotten to himself words of the Law has gotten to himself the life of the world to come.' But these very Scriptures were the writings that bore witness concerning Jesus (see the note on ver. 38). Had they entered into their spirit, they would have joyfully welcomed Him, yet they refused to come (it was not their will to come,—see ver. 6) to Him for life. Such is the general meaning of the verses The Jews had used the witness of the Scriptures as they had dealt with that given by the Baptist (ver. 35). What was designed as a means had been made by them an end; what should have led them to Christ detained them from Him. In a certain sense the Scriptures did contain eternal life, in that they bore witness of Him who was the true bestower of this gift; but as long as men busied themselves with the words of Scripture to the neglect of its purpose, believing that the former would give all they needed and sought, the Scriptures themselves kept them back from life.—It is a little difficult to decide what is the reason for the emphasis which in the original is laid on 'ye' ('*ye* think that,' etc.). The meaning may be: ye yourselves set such honor on the Scriptures that ye think eternal life is found in them. In this case an argument is founded on their own admissions. Or our Lord may intend to refer to this doctrine respecting the Scriptures as *their belief only*, not the truth, not His teaching; *ye* think that in the Scriptures ye have eternal life, but it is not truly so, —eternal life is given by me alone. The latter meaning seems most in harmony with the context. So understood, the words do indeed rebuke that view of Scripture which rests everything on the letter, and also the inconsistency between the reverence which the Jews paid to the sacred writings and their neglect of the purpose they were designed to serve; but to the Scriptures the highest honor is assigned, for Jesus says, 'it is they which bear witness concerning me.' When thus interpreted in the sense in which it appears necessary to understand them, the words of ver. 39 supply a lesson almost the opposite of that usually drawn from them. While they exalt instead of depreciating the Scriptures, their main object is to warn us against putting them into an undue position, or supposing that they are more than a guide to Him in whom alone life is to be gained (comp. 6 : 63). The ordinary rendering of the first word ('Search' for 'Ye search') seems altogether inconsistent with the course of thought in these verses.

Ver. 41. **Glory from men I receive not.** The last nine verses have been an expansion of ver. 31; this verse goes back to the 30th, in which Jesus first contrasts His spirit with theirs, His devotion to the Father's will with their self-seeking. The rest of the chapter is a development of this thought. Yet there is no abrupt break at ver. 40. Jesus has been speaking of the refusal of the Jews to 'believe' Him

42 glory from men. But I know you, that ye have not
43 the love of God in yourselves. I am come in my
Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another
shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

and 'come to' Him as the sufficient and certain evidence of the evil of their hearts. But in so speaking He is not aiming at His own honor, or seeking fame from men. In every claim for Himself He seeks His Father's glory; and the possession of that spirit is the test of the truth and righteousness which are well-pleasing to the Father: see chap. 7: 18; 12: 43.

Ver. 42. **But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.** I know,—that is, I have discerned you, I have read your hearts. Love to God is the foundation of the spirit of self-sacrifice, through which a man seeks not his own, but the Father's will. When love to God rules, therefore, the guiding principle is not the desire after glory from men. The Jews whom our Lord was addressing believed themselves zealous for God; but in the very service which they offered Him they were guilty of self-seeking. They valued themselves on what they presented to Him, and yet they presented not that which most of all He sought,—the love in which self is lost. What striking words are those of this verse to address to men who spent their days in searching the Scriptures and in honoring the divinely-appointed institutions of the Law! Their error was that they had not entered into the spirit of these things, had not seen why God had given them, had not therefore understood that glorious righteousness of God in the presence of which man feels himself to be nothing. They had thought that to God these things were an object in themselves. They had brought God down to the level of caring for that in caring for which as his highest good a man feels himself exalted and glorified.

Ver. 43. **I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.** Referring everything to His Father's power and presence, in everything doing His Father's will and not His own, at all times seeking His Father's glory, Jesus came 'in His Father's name.' Because that was His spirit, they did not receive Him.—**If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.** So far has self-seeking gone with them, that they can understand no other course of action than that which is animated by this principle. If a man come in the opposite spirit to that displayed by Jesus,—setting forth himself alone, seeking his own ends, and guided by no will but his own, though all under the guise of promoting the glory of God,—such a man they will be able to understand. They will sympathize with his motives, will even enthusiastically embrace his cause. The other course they cannot comprehend; so far as they do understand it, it is a constant reproach to them. This is a terrible description of those who were then the rulers of 'God's people Israel:' but, alas! the words apply with perfect fitness to the spirit which in every age of the

44 How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and the glory that *cometh* from [1] the only God
45 ye seek not? Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, *even*

[1] Some ancient authorities read *the only one.*

history of Christ's Church has contended against God whilst professing to do Him service; which in every age has tried to stop the progress of truth,—sometimes without, at other times within, the Church,—as truth has striven to pierce through forms that, once good, have with the course of time stiffened into the rigidity of death. Nothing can save from that spirit but the higher and nobler spirit breathing in the words, 'glory from man I receive not.'

Ver. 44. **How can ye believe, receiving glory one of another?** As in the preceding verses, the word *receive* is to be understood as implying a desire and a 'seeking' on their part. Such love of honor from men is altogether inconsistent with the 'believing' of which our Lord speaks. He is not referring to a merely intellectual act, but to an act which is also moral,—not to believing an assertion, but to believing in Him. Where there is self-seeking there can be no true faith.—**And the glory that is from the only God ye seek not.** They who thus sought glory from men sought not glory from 'the only God.' The Jews were the champions of the doctrine of the unity of God, and, in the very pursuits and aims which our Lord condemns, persuaded themselves that they sought the glory of God and merited reward. But with such aims it was impossible to please Him, and thus they missed the recompense which comes from 'the only God,' who is the 'only' dispenser of true glory.

Ver. 45. **Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye have placed your hope.** These words do not diminish, but increase the severity of our Lord's condemning words. Their objects of trust have been successively taken away. They have the Scriptures; but they have so used them as to miss their whole design; they are rejecting Him of whom they witness, and are offering to God a labor and a zeal which have no value in His sight. The chief tenet in their faith is that 'God is one' (Deut. 6: 4; Jas. 2: 19); but, in the absence of the 'love of God' from their hearts, their zeal for orthodox faith has not gained for them the 'glory that is from the only God.' There has been more, however, than misuse and loss. Their very lawgiver, Moses, in whom they had set their hope, is already their accuser before God. No further accusation is needed. No more crushing blow could be given to their pride. Moses *their* accuser before God! Yet it was so. When we refuse to enter into all the parts of God's plan, the very parts of it for whose sake our refusal is given, and whose honor we imagine we are maintaining, turn round upon us and disown our aid.

46 Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote
47 of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

## Chapter 6: 1–21.

### *The Feeding of the Five Thousand.*

1 After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.

Ver. 46. **For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me: for he wrote concerning me.** Our Lord, no doubt, refers in part to special predictions (such as that of Deut. 18: 15, 18); but more especially He refers to the whole revelation of divine truth contained in the books of Moses, and by parity of reasoning to the whole Old Testament—the Scriptures of ver. 39. In all the revelation given through him, Moses wrote concerning Jesus. His great purpose was to prepare the way for the true Prophet and Priest and King of Israel. Christ was 'the end of the law.' Had, therefore, the Jews 'believed Moses'—that is, accepted his witness in its true character, and entered into its spirit—they would have been led by that preparatory prophetic teaching to believe the Christ of whom Moses wrote.

Ver. 47. **But if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words?** If, however, they did not truly believe the written word, which was constantly in their hands, which was the object of so much reverence, which, as written, could be studied again and again for the removal of every difficulty and the investigation of every claim, then might it well be expected that they would refuse to receive the words which Jesus spoke.

### *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*, 6: 1–21.

Contents.—The sixth chapter continues the conflict of Jesus with the Jews, under the same point of view as that which we found to be prominent in chap. v. As in that chapter Jesus was the fulfilment of the Sabbath, so in this He is the fulfilment of the Passover; He is the true bread, the true substance of our Paschal feast. The section now before us, contained in the first part of the chapter, may be divided into three subordinate parts: (1) vers. 1–13, the miracle of the multiplying of the bread; (2) vers. 14, 15, the effect produced by the miracle upon the Galilæan multitude, leading Jesus to withdraw to the other side of the sea; (3) vers. 16–21, the storm and the reassuring of the disciples.

Ver. 1. **After these things.** Like chap. v., this chapter opens with an indefinite note of time, 'after these things.' In the former instance we saw that the interval covered by the expression may have been two or three months; here, if we take the feast spoken of in chap. 5: 1 to have been the feast of Purim, the events of the two chapters 5 and 6 were not separated by more than about two or three weeks, for Purim was past and the Passover was drawing near (ver. 4). From the other Evangelists we know that Jesus went into Galilee after the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14); and also that after the death of the Baptist He withdrew from Galilee (Matt. 14: 13; Mark 6: 31). In this Gospel we have already met with two visits to Galilee (chap. 2: 1; 4: 3 and 43), and another is implied in the verse before us. Which of these three is the journey spoken of in Matt. 4: 12? Certainly not the first (John 2: 1, 11), for John was not then cast into prison (chap. 3: 24). Probably not the second, for chap. 4 : 1 implies that the Baptist was still at that time engaged in active work (see note on 4: 1). It would seem therefore that the visit to which the earlier Evangelists give so much prominence, which indeed is the commencement of their detailed history of the Saviour's public ministry, took place after the feast to which reference is made in chap. 5: 1. It is in complete accordance with this that Jesus in chap. 5: 35 uses words which appear to indicate that the Baptist's public work was at an end. If this view be correct, the earlier Evangelists enable us completely to fill up the interval between chaps. 5 and 6. Indeed, assuming the feast of chap. 5 to be Purim, the chief objection raised against the view we advocate is that the period of three weeks is too short for the events which come in between our Lord's journey to Galilee and the Feeding of the Multitude. Mark, for instance, relates the one in 1: 14 and the other in 6: 30–44. No doubt the first impression made on any reader is that such a series of events must have occupied months rather than weeks; but if the narrative be attentively examined, it will be found that there is no real ground for such an impression. The three Evangelists seem to have been led rather to give a full description of certain parts than an outline of the whole of our Lord's ministry in Galilee. If the days seem crowded with events, the intensity of the living ministry of Jesus does but receive the fuller illustration, and we have the most impressive comment on His own words in this Gospel (4: 34; 9: 4) and on the closing testimony of the apostle (21: 25). Between these chapters, then, must be placed many of the most familiar chapters of the earlier Gospels. To say nothing of the wonderful miracles wrought in Capernaum and in other places on the coast of the sea of Galilee, to this interval belong the appointment of the twelve apostles, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 13), the death of John the Baptist in the castle of Machærus. But John's omission of all that happened during our Lord's sojourn in Galilee until the point to which this verse relates is in accord with the general structure of his Gospel; and the special reason which led him to relate the particular events of this chapter, and these only, will be noticed as we proceed. Nothing, we may add, can more strikingly illustrate the two-fold character of our Lord's teaching, as addressed to 'the Jews' and the

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they
beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.
3 And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he
4 sat with his disciples. Now the passover, the feast of

doctors of the law, on the one hand, and to the multitudes of Galilee, on the other, than a comparison of the discourse in Jerusalem, which we have just considered (chap. 5), with the Sermon and the Parables spoken but a few days later.—**Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.** From Luke 9: 10 we learn that the place to which Jesus crossed over was Bethsaida, that is, Bethsaida Julias in Gaulonitis, a place near the north-eastern corner of the lake, to be carefully distinguished from Bethsaida of Galilee, which was on the western shore. It is remarkable that John should give a two-fold designation of the sea—sea of Galilee and (sea) of Tiberias. The latter name, which perhaps was best known by those amongst whom he wrote, is used by him alone, here and in chap. 21: 1; the former, 'sea of Galilee,' is the name regularly used by Matthew and Mark. In Luke's Gospel the only name is lake of Gennesaret (chap. 5: 1).

Ver. 2. **And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.** The Greek words are very expressive, pointing clearly to repeated miracles of healing, on account of which crowds followed him continually from place to place. This is the only verse in John's Gospel corresponding with the many passages in the Synoptic Gospels that briefly record a multitude of such works (Matt. 4: 24; 8: 16; 9: 35; 15: 30; Mark 6: 56; Luke 9: 11, etc.); and it refers to that very Galilæan ministry to which those records belong. In Judæa, as in unbelieving Nazareth (Mark 6: 5), 'He could not do many mighty works.'

Ver. 3. **And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.** He retired for the purpose of rest and prayer, and that he might instruct his disciples—the twelve who had just returned from their mission (Mark 6: 30). 'The mountain' we must probably understand in a general sense as meaning the high ground near Bethsaida. In this part the eastern hills closely approach the lake.

Ver. 4. **Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was nigh.** On the words 'of the Jews' see the notes on 1: 19; 2: 13. The addition here serves to explain why Jesus did not go up to the Passover. He had been rejected by the Jews at the former Passover (2: 18): the feast, which had before that time been robbed by them of its sanctity, belonged after their rejection of Him no longer to His Father, but 'to the Jews.' But if Jesus did not visit Jerusalem for this festival, why is it mentioned here? It certainly serves a chronological purpose (though it must be remembered that we cannot say

5 the Jews, was at hand. Jesus therefore lifting up his
eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto
him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy [1] bread,
6 that these may eat? And this he said to prove him:

[1] Gr. *loaves.*

*with absolute certainty* that this was the Passover immediately following that of 2: 11); but even in such incidental notices as these, John has not his eye only or chiefly on chronology. Some have supposed that it is to account for the crowds which followed Him, and which may have consisted mainly or partly of the Galilean caravan on its way to the holy city to attend the feast. But ver. 2 makes this unlikely, for it gives an entirely different explanation of the concourse. Besides which, ver. 5 seems to connect the notice of the season and the miracle to follow in such a way as to suggest rather an internal than an external relation between them. It is probable, therefore, that the Evangelist, by this mention of the Passover, intends to show us the light in which the whole narrative should be viewed. The miracle and the discourses alike relate to the true Passover, the reality and substance of that feast which has now, alas! become 'the feast of the Jews.'

Ver. 5. **Jesus therefore having lifted up his eyes, and having seen that a great multitude cometh unto him.** The place in which the multitudes were gathering was a desert plain at the foot of the hills.—**Saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?** It was as they drew near that Jesus addressed the question to Philip The other narratives say nothing of it; but all represent the disciples as coming to their Lord when the day began to wane to beg Him to send away the multitudes. Our Lord's question to Philip, then, is entirely independent of the later petition of the Twelve. Even were it otherwise, however, and were John referring to the same point of time as the other Evangelists, there would be no ground whatever for asserting that there is any discrepancy between the narratives, for none of them can contain all that passed between the disciples and their Master. Besides this, the eleven may not have heard the words, or may not have seen their significance if they did hear them.

Ver. 6. **Now this he said proving him: for he himself knew what he was about to do.** Why Philip was addressed, is a question often raised. The mention of the circumstance may be only the graphic touch of an eye-witness, and there may be nothing important in the Master's choice of the disciple whose faith He is to try. Yet it is more likely that some special reason did exist. Philip may have had something to do with making provision for the wants of the company of disciples: this is not inconsistent with chap. 12: 6. Or there may have been something in the character of Philip's mind that led to the special selection of him for trial; and the incident re-

7 for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred [1]pennyworth of [2]bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a lit-
8 tle. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's
9 brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are
10 these among so many? Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

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[1] See marginal note on Matt. 18: 28.

[2] Gr. *loaves*.

lated in 12: 22 has been appealed to as showing a tendency on his part to a caution that might become excessive and obstructive to the development of faith. A more correct explanation may be that, intending to manifest Himself as the fulfilment of what is written in the law, Jesus turns first to one who had confessed Him as the subject of 'the law and the prophets' (1: 45). He would test him, and try whether he had entered into the full meaning of his own confession.

Ver. 7. **Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.** As the number of the men alone proved to be five thousand, an expenditure of 200 'pence' (*i. e.* 200 *denarii*) would allow less than a *denarius*, or about eight pence of our money, to twenty-five persons, and that sum would not purchase in ordinary times more than five or six ounces of bread for each. Philip might well say, that it was 'not sufficient for them.'

Ver. 8. **One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him.** On the appellation here given to Andrew see on chap. 1: 40. Andrew is again associated with Philip in chap. 12: 22.

Ver. 9. **There is a little lad here which hath five barley loaves and two fishes: but what are they among so many?** John shows Andrew as standing somewhat in advance of Philip, in that he does not hesitate to think that their little store may be set before the multitude, though he is perplexed at his own suggestion. This is in accordance with the fact that in the lists of the apostles Andrew takes precedence of Philip.

Ver. 10. **Jesus said, Make the people sit down.** 'The people,' a general word, including both men and women, is used here. They are directed to sit down, partly for the sake of order and ease in the distribution of the food, but also because the Lord is preparing to set a feast before them, and they sit down with Him as His guests.—**Now there was much grass in the place.** So Mark speaks of the 'green grass'—a minute, but interesting coincidence. The circumstance is one that an eye-witness would naturally note, especially after relating the direction given, that the multitude should

11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.
12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that

sit down. John alone has given the season of the year (ver. 4); on this day of early spring the grass would be flourishing and abundant. —**So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.** The 'men' are now singled out for a special reason, probably because they, according to the custom of the East, sat down first. We may also suppose that the number of women and children would not be very large.

Ver. 11. **Jesus therefore took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that had sat down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.** Jesus alone is mentioned; but there is no doubt that He employed the agency of His disciples. In Mark 6: 41 we read that Jesus *gave the loaves to His disciples* to set before the multitude; but, in the very same verse, that the 'two fishes *divided He* amongst them all;' yet we cannot doubt that the mode of distribution would be the same in both cases. However done, the work of distribution was really His, and the Evangelist would fix our thoughts on Him alone. This miracle, as has often been remarked, is (with the exception of our Lord's resurrection) the only one related by all four Evangelists. The differences in the accounts are very slight. It is curious to note that in all the other narratives of it our Lord is said to have 'blessed' before He brake the loaves, whereas in the two accounts of the feeding of the four thousand He 'gave thanks' before breaking the bread: here, however, *giving thanks* takes the place of *blessing*. When the miracle is referred to below (ver. 23), the Lord's 'giving thanks' is brought into prominence. This would seem to show that the word is here used with intentional significance, probably with marked reference to the Paschal meal, at which thanksgiving played so important a part. There is a striking resemblance indeed between the description before us and the accounts of the last supper, especially that given in 1 Cor. 11.

Ver. 12. **And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather together the pieces that remain, that nothing be lost.** The earlier Gospels relate the act of the disciples, but not the command of Jesus. John, everywhere intent on what his Master did and said, preserves for us this word. The design of the command is to bring out the preciousness of the food which Jesus had given—not to teach a lesson of economy, or to reprove the over-scrupulous calculations of Andrew and Philip. It is usual to understand by 'pieces' the fragments broken by the multitude during their meal; but it is more probable that they were pieces broken by our Lord—

13 nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled
twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had
14 eaten. When therefore the people saw the [1]sign
which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet
that cometh into the world.

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *signs.*

pieces that remained undistributed or unconsumed because of the abundance of the supply.

Ver. 13. **Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.** The repetition of the words: 'the five barley loaves,' is remarkable; the writer wishes to lay emphasis on the identity of the fragments with the loaves of the original supply. Mark speaks of the collection of the fragments of the fishes (6: 43); John, intent on the idea to be unfolded, alike in the scene and in the discourse that followed it, passes by this circumstance. The number of baskets was twelve. We can hardly doubt that each apostle had his own 'basket,' and that each of these was filled. Nor is it fanciful to see in this a token that what was symbolized by the precious bread was destined for each tribe of Israel. In every narrative of this miracle, the same word (*cophinus*) is used for basket; in the accounts of the feeding of the four thousand (Matt. 15: 37; Mark 8: 8), the word is entirely different; and where the two miracles are referred to together, each retains the word that belongs to it; so that in Matt. 16: 9, 10, and Mark 8: 19, 20, the word 'baskets,' repeated in our translation, answers to different words. John's agreement with the other Evangelists in so minute a point as the use of *cophinus* in connection with this miracle is interesting and important.

Ver. 14. **When therefore the people saw the sign that he did, they said.** 'The people,'—*i. e.*, the people of ver. 10, those who had been fed and satisfied. Are we, however, to understand that they saw the 'wonder,' but saw in it no 'sign,' as it is said by our Lord below, 'Ye follow me not because ye saw signs;' or may we suppose that even to this multitude the miracle was a sign, like the miracles of healing which they had witnessed before? (ver. 2). The latter interpretation is nearer to the words of John, and is more probable. If in any sense the cures were 'signs' to the beholders, the multiplying of the loaves must have been a greater 'sign.' Their own words confirm this, for they receive the miracle as the heaven-appointed token of the mission of Jesus. Still they did not really look beneath the surface; in the depth of meaning which the word has to John, the wonderful work was not apprehended as a 'sign.' Our Lord's design in this chapter is, as we shall see, to remove their igno-

15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

rance on this very point.—**This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.** To an Israelite a miracle at once suggested the thought of *a* prophet (Deut. 13 : 1), as the general name for one who had received a Divine mission. But here it is of *the* Prophet that they speak, no doubt referring to the promise of Deut. 18 : 15 (see note on chap. 1 : 21). The general expectation which lay in the hearts of men at this time clothed itself in different forms of expression, according to the events which drew it forth. Perhaps the miracle of Elisha (2 Kings 4 : 43) rose to their thought, or that of Elijah (1 Kings 17 : 14) ; and the memory of their ancient prophets drew along with it the promise of the Prophet now to come. More probably it was to the miracle of the manna that their minds recurred, and the work of Moses brought to recollection the promise which Moses left behind him for the last days. The words used by the people leave no doubt that here at least the Prophet is identified with the Messiah, whose most frequent designation seems to have been 'He that cometh '(Matt. 11 : 3, etc.), or more fully, 'He that cometh into the world' (comp. chap. 1 : 9).

Ver. 15. **Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and carry him off to make him king, retired again into the mountain himself alone.** The thought of 'Messiah' is the connecting link between the exclamation related in the last verse and the purpose here mentioned. The Messiah is to reign in the royal city: to Jerusalem therefore they would now carry Him by force, and there proclaim Him king. Their words here given are taken up again in chap. 12: 13, when the Galilean multitudes go to meet Him to escort Him in triumph into Jerusalem, crying out, 'Blessed is *He that cometh* in the name of the Lord, *the King* of Israel.' But the hour for a triumphant entry has not yet arrived. Jesus reads their purpose, and frustrates it by retiring again to 'the mountain' (ver. 3), from which He came down to teach the multitudes and to heal their sick (Luke 9 : 11). The first two Evangelists tell us that He retired into the mountain 'to pray ;' but the two motives assigned are in no way inconsistent with each other. Our Lord's withdrawal from view after His miracles is frequently noticed in this Gospel. The reason here explained would naturally operate at other times also ; but there are peculiarities of language which seem to show that John beheld in all the 'signs'—which were occasional manifestations of the glory of Jesus—emblems of His whole manifestation, of all that lay between His coming forth from the Father and His final withdrawal from the world and return to the Father. There is a beautiful harmony between the prayer of which other Gospels speak, the solitariness ('Himself alone') here brought before us, and the later

16 And when evening came, his disciples went down
17 unto the sea; and they entered into a boat, and
were going over the sea unto Capernaum. And it
was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.
18 And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind

words of Jesus, 'He that sent me is with me, He hath not left me alone, because the Father is with me' (chap. 16 : 32).

No one can read the four narratives of this miracle without being struck with their essential harmony in the midst of apparent diversities. Every narrative contributes some new feature; almost every one introduces some particular which we cannot with positive certainty adjust with the other narratives, though we may see clearly that in more ways than one it might be so adjusted. It is especially necessary in this place to call attention to these other narratives, because John alone records the impression made upon the multitude, and as has been well suggested by Godet, this impression may explain a very remarkable word used both by Matthew and by Mark. These Evangelists relate (Matt. 14: 32; Mark 6: 45) that Jesus 'compelled' His disciples to return to their boat until He should have dismissed the people. No motive for the compulsion is supplied by the two writers who use the word. If, however, this was the crisis of the Galilean ministry, and the multitudes, impressed by other recent miracles, and moved beyond measure by the last, must now be withheld from their premature design to proclaim Him king, it becomes necessary forcibly to separate the disciples as well as Himself from the excited crowds in the hour of their highly-wrought enthusiasm. Even though Jesus Himself were absent, yet if the contagious excitement of the people should communicate itself to the Galilean disciples also, the plan of His working would (humanly speaking) be frustrated. Perhaps, too, this decisive breaking with the impulses of the multitude, this practical renunciation of the honors the people would confer and of the political sovereignty to which they would raise Him, may furnish one reason for John's selection of this miracle, already so well known in the Church. Another reason is made evident by the discourse of this chapter.

Ver. 16. **And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea.** Before Jesus retired to the mountain He had constrained His disciples to leave Him for the shore: when they had left He dismissed the people, withdrawing from them, probably by exercising such influence as is implied in chap. 5: 13; 8: 50; 10: 39.

Ver. 17. **And entered into a boat, and were coming over the sea unto Capernaum. And darkness had already come on, and Jesus was not yet come to them.** Probably they were intending to coast along the shore of the lake between Bethsaida-Julias and Capernaum: in this they were no doubt following their Master's directions. The words that follow show clearly that they expected Him to rejoin them at some point on the coast.

Ver. 18. **And the sea was raging by reason of a great wind that blew.** The darkness and the storm rendered their po-

19 that blew. When therefore they had rowed about
five and twenty and thirty furlongs, they beheld
Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto
20 the boat: and they were afraid. But he saith unto
21 them, It is I; be not afraid. They were willing
therefore to receive him into the boat: and straight-

sition one of great peril. There had arisen one of those sudden and violent squalls to which all inland waters surrounded by lofty hills intersected with gullies are liable. Many travelers bear witness to the fact that such storms beat with peculiar force upon the sea of Galilee. In the present instance the 'great wind' would seem to have been from the north. The immediate effect of the storm was to drive the disciples out to sea till they reached the middle of the lake, which is at its broadest a little south of their starting-point.

Ver. 19. **So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs.** If the wind had driven them southwards soon after their starting, they would be near the eastern coast at a point where the lake is about forty furlongs broad. If therefore they had rowed twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they would not be far from 'the midst of the sea' (Mark 6: 47). The agreement between the two narratives is clearly 'undesigned,' and therefore the more interesting. **They beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid.** When Jesus drew near to the boat, it was the 'fourth watch' (Matt. 14: 25), and therefore the darkest part of the night; some eight or nine hours had passed since they left Him with the multitude. The wind was boisterous, the sea raging, their strength was spent with rowing (Mark 6: 48), when suddenly they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, in the immediate neighborhood of the boat. They knew not that it was He, and were terrified.

Vers. 20, 21. **But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat.** His voice and manner were enough to remove all their fears. They would have kept away from the apparition, affrighted; but now their will was to receive their Master. This renewed mention of the 'will' (compare chap. 5: 6, 40) is striking and characteristic. In the first two Evangelists we read of our Lord's entering the boat, some have thought that the words here present a difficulty as implying a desire on the part of the disciples that was not fulfilled. But there is really no discrepancy whatever. John mentions the will only, assuming that every reader would understand that the will was carried into effect (comp. 1: 43; 5: 35)—**And immediately the boat was at the land whither they went.** They were making for Capernaum, and this town they reached immediately. It is plain that John intends to relate what was not an ordinary occurrence but a miracle. The first two Evangelists do not speak of it, but their words way the boat was at the land whither they were going.

## Chapter 6: 22–74.

### *Passover Discourses of Jesus.*

22 On the morrow the multitude which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other

are in perfect harmony with John's account, for immediately after the lulling of the wind they mention the completion of the voyage. This is the fourth of the 'signs' recorded in this Gospel. Unlike the former miracle (the feeding of the multitude), it is not mentioned again or in any way expressly referred to; hence we have less certainty as to the position assigned to it by the Evangelist. That to him it was not a mere matter of history we may be sure; but the event is not as closely interwoven with the texture of his narrative as are the other miracles which he records. The thoughts which are here prominent are the separation of the disciples from their Lord, their difficulties amid the darkness and the storm, their fear as they dimly see Jesus approaching, the words which remove their fear, their 'will' to receive Him, the immediate end of all their trouble and danger. The cardinal thought is their safety when they have received Jesus. The narrative is connected with that which precedes in that, here as there, all attention is concentrated on the Redeemer Himself, who in sovereign power and in infinite grace manifests His glory. It is still more closely joined with what comes after, as it teaches on the one hand the safety of all who are with Him (vers. 37-39), and on the other the necessity of man's *receiving* Him, opening his heart to His words, committing Himself to Him by faith (ver. 40). We cannot doubt that the question of Jesus and the answer of the twelve, of which we read in ver. 68, are closely linked with the teaching of that night in which the disciples found at once the end of peril and rest from toil when they saw and received their Lord.

### *Passover Discourses of Jesus,* vers. 22-74.

Contents. In the miracle of the multiplying of the bread Jesus has symbolically presented Himself as the true bread of life. This thought is now unfolded in the various discourses with which the remainder of the chapter is occupied, while at the same time the effect of these discourses is traced upon the different classes of hearers introduced to us. The subordinate parts of this section are determined by the mention of these classes—(1) vers. 22-40, a discourse addressed to the 'multitude,' which must here, as elsewhere, be carefully distinguished from the 'Jews;' (2) vers. 41-51, a discourse to the 'Jews' who had 'murmured' at the words spoken to the multitude. The discourse contains the same great truths as those previously dwelt upon, but in a sharper and more pointed form; (3) vers. 52-59, a discourse by which the 'Jews' are still further irritated. Formerly they murmured; now they strive among themselves,

[1]boat there, save one, and that Jesus entered not
with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples
23 went away alone (howbeit there came [2]boats from
Tiberias nigh unto the place where they ate the
24 bread after the Lord had given thanks): when the

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[1] Gr. *little boat.* [2] Gr. *little boats.*

and the discourse becomes still sharper and more pointed than before; (4) vers. 60-66, in which the effect of the truths spoken by Jesus shows itself even upon the disciples, many of whom are so offended that they walk no more with Him; (5) vers. 67-71,—while many of the disciples are thus offended, the Twelve, with the exception of Judas, are drawn more closely to Jesus, and Peter in their name makes confession of his faith.

Ver. 22. **The day following, the multitude which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other little boat there, save one, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples went away alone.** During the night of the storm the multitude remained near the scene of the miracle. In the morning they are gathered on the north-eastern coast, deliberating how Jesus might be found. They saw no boat on the shore save one little boat too small to hold the twelve disciples, who could not therefore have returned in it to take away their Master: yet it was certain that when the disciples set sail the evening before Jesus did not go with them. The natural inference was that He was still on the eastern shore, but that His disciples were at Capernaum or some neighboring place on the other side of the sea.

Ver. 23. **Howbeit there came boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat the bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.** Whilst they were still in wonder and doubt, other boats came across the sea near to the scene of the miracle of the preceding day. These boats were from Tiberias, and from the boatmen who brought them the multitude would learn at once that neither Jesus nor His disciples had gone thither.

Ver. 24. **When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the little boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.** If Jesus was neither on the eastern shore nor at Tiberias, He might be sought near Capernaum, in the direction of which town the disciples had sailed. John's words clearly imply that there was an eager and diligent search for Jesus on the part of the multitude before they left the spot where they had witnessed His power. The prominence given to the thought of Jesus in these verses is very marked. What is said of the disciples has no independent value: their movements are described solely that light may be thrown upon those of their Master. When convinced that it was vain further to prosecute the search in that region, the multitude obtained possession of the smaller boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the [1]boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.
25 And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou
26 hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were

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[1] Gr. *little boats.*

Ver. 25. **And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?** The 'other side' denotes the western coast. Their question on finding Jesus in Capernaum but partly expresses their thoughts, which would rest as much on the *how* as on the '*when*' of His coming to this place. He had not left the eastern shore with His disciples; the storm of the night must have forbidden any attempt to make the passage then; and, as they well knew, He had not come to the western shore in their company. The question is not answered, but the eager search which it implied is made to lead the way to deeper instruction as to the miracle which had drawn them to follow Him.

Ver. 26. **Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were satisfied.** This solemn declaration is only seemingly discordant with ver. 2 or ver. 14. Those who witnessed a miracle of Jesus, and did not understand its significance might be said to see the sign and yet not to see it. Indeed, ver. 14 seems to imply a third condition of mind, intermediate between these. Those who had eaten of the loaves saw in the miracle the proof that Jesus was the Prophet who should come: they saw that the wonder was significant, but the words before us show that even this stood below the true perception of the 'sign.' The miracle had led the thoughts of the multitude to the power and dignity of the miracle-worker, but had suggested nothing of a higher and a spiritual work, symbolized by the material bounty that had been bestowed. The design of the work in its relation to the Saviour was to manifest His glory as the Giver of the highest blessings; in its relation to the people, to fix their eyes on Him and to awaken their desire for that of which the bread had been the sign. Part of this purpose has been attained,—they have sought Him eagerly, with toil and trouble:—He must now so complete their training that they may be led to leave the carnal and seek the spiritual, that they may be brought to behold in His deeds not merely the tokens of His power to satisfy every earthly desire of His followers, but the impress of His Divine character and work.

27 filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the

Ver. 27. **Work not for the eating which perisheth.** The rendering 'work' is required to bring out the connection with the following verse, in which the same word is used. The language of the original is very expressive: 'Work,' use all the energies of your nature, not unto partaking of perishable but of imperishable food. It is not an act of life but the active life itself that is referred to, and the object of this whole life. When we bring together this verse and that which precedes, we cannot doubt that our Lord, in speaking of working for perishable food, alludes to the labor which the multitude had undergone in their persistent search for Him. As their object in thus seeking Him had been carnal, not spiritual, this act of theirs (good and wise in itself,—most blessed, had the aim been higher and more true) was a fitting type of their life, a life occupied with the search after material good and the satisfaction of lower wants and desires.—**But for the eating which abideth, unto eternal life which the Son of man shall give unto you.** In contrast with what they had sought in thus toiling to discover Him, Jesus sets the feast which it is His glory to offer and of which they should be eager to partake. As in 4: 14 He had spoken of the gift of water which had power to quench for ever the recipient's thirst, so here He speaks of an eating that abides and never perishes. That verse and this are closely parallel, and each helps to explain the other. In the one Jesus says what the water that He giveth shall become *in him* that receiveth it: here in like manner it is not of meat that He speaks, but of 'eating,'—not of food itself, but of food *appropriated.* In both passages the words 'unto eternal life' occur; and in each case there is some difficulty in determining whether the phrase belongs to the word preceding or to the whole thought of the clause. Yet, as in the first it is probable that 'life eternal' is the end attained when the fountain is opened in the soul, so in this verse 'unto' does not seem to belong to 'abideth,' but to express the object of that 'eating' for which they may and ought to work. Not the eating that perisheth, but the eating that abideth, must absorb their labor, that they may thus win eternal life. If this is the connection intended by John, we must certainly join the second relative 'which' (not with 'eating,' but) with the words that immediately precede, viz. 'eternal life.' There is nothing difficult in such a connection of the words; on the contrary, it is easier than any other, and best agrees with the following verses and with other passages in the Gospel. Almost uniformly in this chapter Jesus speaks of Himself as the bread of life, and of the Father as the Giver of the bread, while 'eternal life' is the result of receiving Him as the living bread (vers. 33, 51, 54). A close parallel is found in chap. 10: 28: 'I give unto them eternal life,' as also in chap. 17: 2; and the connection of the 'Son of man' with this

28 Father, *even* God, hath sealed. They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the

gift reminds us at once of chap. 3: 14. How this gift will become theirs, the later verses explain: the two points here are that this life is obtained from the Son of man—from the God-man alone, and that it is a free gift from Him. This is not inconsistent with the 'working' of which Jesus has spoken. The multitudes had toiled, in that they had put aside all obstacles to come to Him: having come to Him they may receive His free gift. The reception of the gift is opposed to laboring for wages or for merit, but not to earnest effort. The gift can be bestowed in its fulness on those only whose one thought and one effort are bent on receiving it: were there no such activity on our part, we could not be in a position to receive the gift without destroying the nature we possess.—**For him the Father, God, did seal.** For this very purpose that He might be the Giver of eternal life, was He made the Son of man, was He sent by the Father into the world. (Compare chap. 10: 36; 17: 2.) He came commissioned by the Father: on Him the Father's seal was set. The reference is not to the miracle just related, as if Jesus would say that what they had themselves seen was the Father's attestation of Him, the evidence which should have led them to believe in Him. This is but a small part of the truth, as what is said in chap. 5 on the witness of the Father very plainly shows. There, however, the thought is made to rest on the continued and abiding testimony of the Father: here the whole attestation is looked upon as concentrated in one past act of the Father, as included and implied in the act of 'sending' the Son; and this Father is 'God,' that God whom they themselves allowed to be the supreme source and end of all things. The special reference to the Father in this verse, where Jesus speaks of the gift of eternal life, receives its explanation from ver. 57 (which see).

Ver. 28. **They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?** Our Lord's answer seems to have been but little comprehended by 'the multitude.' They reply with an earnest inquiry, taking up all that they have understood, but missing the central point of His words. He had first bidden them work, His last word had spoken of the Divine authority He bore: their answer deals with 'works of God,' but contains no reference to eternal life or to the promise of a free gift from the Son of man. The works of the law were to them a familiar thought, and they understood that God through His new prophet was commanding them to do some new work. Their question: 'What must we do,' shows a teachable disposition, and a willingness to learn from Him what was the will of God. But what did they mean by 'the works of God?' The expression is used in various senses in the Old Testament. The works of the Lord may be the works done by Him, or they may be the works which He commands and which are according to His mind. In this verse we cannot think of miracles, nor is it easy

29 works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them,
This is the work of God, that ye believe on him
30 whom [1]he hath sent. They said therefore unto him,
What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see,

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[1] Or, *he sent.*

to believe that the people can have had in their thoughts the works which God produces in those who are His. In its connection here, the expression recalls such passages as Jer. 48: 10; 1 Cor. 15: 58; Rev. 2: 26. The whole phrase (with slight alteration) occurs in Num. 8: 11, in the Septuagint: 'Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, . . . that they may work the works of the Lord.' As the meaning in these passages is *the works which the Lord would have them do*, as the works of the law are those which the law prescribes, so here the works of God signify those which He commands, and which therefore are pleasing to Him.

Ver. 29. **Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he sent.** The one work which God would have them do is believing in Him whom He sent. The people had spoken of 'works,' thinking of outward deeds; but that which God commands is one work, faith in Jesus. This faith leads to union with Him and participation of His Spirit, and thus includes in itself all works that are pleasing to God. We must not suppose that our Lord intends to rebuke their question: 'What must we do,' as if He would say: It is not doing, but believing. The act of believing in Jesus, the soul's casting itself on Him with perfect trust, is here spoken of as a work, as something which requires the exercise of man's will and calls forth determination and effort. It is very noticeable that these words of Jesus directly touch that thought in ver. 27, which their answer (ver. 28) neglected. The work of theirs of which He had spoken was their toil to come to Him: He had prescribed no other work, but had sought to lead them to the higher object, the attainment of the abiding nourishment, unto eternal life offered by the Son of man. So here: every disturbing or extraneous thought is put aside; and, with even unusual directness, force, and simplicity, Jesus shows that the one cardinal requirement of the Father is the reception of the Son by faith.

Ver. 30. **They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou as a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?** The words of Jesus had now become too plain to be misunderstood. It was clear that He would turn them away from such works as they had had in view, and fix all thought upon Himself; while at the same time His words breathed no spirit of mere self-assertion, but claimed to be an expression of the Divine will. Such a claim no other prophet had ever made; such a claim can only be justified by some special sign which no one can challenge or mistake; and the sign must correspond with the claim. The day before

31 and believe thee? what workest thou? Our fathers
ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He
32 gave them bread out of heaven to eat. Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Jesus had been with them as a Teacher only: the miracle had constrained them to acknowledge Him as 'the Prophet who should come.' But the words He has just used can only suit One who is higher even than Moses. Before they can believe Him when He thus speaks (note the significant change from 'believe in Him,' ver. 29, to 'believe thee,' *i. e.* accept thy claims), some sign equal to the greatest wrought by Moses, or even some greater sign, must be displayed.

Ver. 31. **Our fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness.** Amongst the miracles wrought by Moses, the Jews seem (and with reason) to have assigned to the manna a foremost place. In a Hebrew commentary on Ecclesiastes there is preserved a saying of great interest in connection with this passage: 'As the first Redeemer made the manna to descend, as it is written, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; so the later Redeemer also shall make the manna to descend, as it is written, May there be abundance of corn in the earth' (Ps. 72: 19).—**As it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.** Of the many characteristics distinguishing the miracle of the manna, one is here dwelt upon—neither the abundance of its supply nor its continuance, but its source: it was 'bread out of heaven.' The bread with which they themselves had just been fed, though marvellously increased in quantity, was still natural bread, the bread of earth: 'bread out of heaven' was the proof received by their fathers that their Benefactor was the God of heaven. What similar evidence could Jesus offer? The words here quoted from Scripture do not exactly agree with any passage of the Old Testament. In Ps. 78: 24 we read (following the Greek version): 'And He rained for them manna to eat, and gave them bread of heaven;' and in Ex. 16: 4: 'Behold I rain for you bread out of heaven.' The words in the verse before us are therefore substantially a quotation from the psalm, with one important change introduced from the narrative of Exodus, 'out of heaven' for 'of heaven.' The change is important, because it points more distinctly to the source of the supply, and not its quality only, and because the expression 'out of heaven' is taken up by our Lord and used by Him with marked emphasis.

Ver. 32. **Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you.** The gravity of the truth declared in this verse is indicated by the solemn 'Verily, verily,' which now occurs for the second time in this discourse.—**Moses gave you not the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the bread out of heaven, the true bread.** If we compare these words with ver. 26, in which the formula, 'Verily, verily,' is first used, we easily trace the advance in the thought. There, in general terms, the peo-

It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread
33 out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto

ple are enjoined not to set their thought on the perishable food; here Jesus declares that the true bread given out of heaven is not the manna, but that which His Father is at this moment offering them. In the words of ver. 31, 'he gave them bread,' the multitude may have had Moses in their thoughts; but that is not the meaning of the Psalmist, the context having the clearest reference to God. It is probable that our Lord here mentions Moses only to point out more distinctly the past and inferior gift of the manna by the servant of God, in contrast with the true bread now offered to them by the Father. It was not Moses who gave the manna; still less had their fathers received from him the true bread of heaven. The Father, who gave to their fathers the symbol, offers the reality now. 'My Father,' Jesus says, because He is leading His hearers onwards to the truth declared in the next two verses, that the 'true bread' given out of heaven is Himself, the Son.

Ver. 33. **For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.** The 'bread of God' is the bread which God gives (ver. 32). It is not easy to decide on the translation of this verse. The Greek equally admits of two renderings—either 'he that cometh,' or 'that (bread) which cometh.' If the former is correct, our Lord begins here to identify Himself with the 'true bread;' if the latter, the figure is retained unexplained until ver. 35. The expressions in vers. 50 and 58 do not decide the point; for after ver. 35 the descent from heaven might with equal propriety be connected either with the bread or with Him whom the bread symbolized. Nor does the present tense 'cometh down' compel us to refer the word to the bread; for Jesus might be designated 'He that cometh from heaven' (comp. chap. 3: 31) as correctly as 'He that came from heaven:' one description relates to nature and origin, the other to a past fact of history. On the whole, however, it seems best to carry on the thought of the bread in this verse. The very word 'come down' is used (Ex. 16) in the account of the manna; and the answer of the multitude in ver. 34 seems to show that no new and (to them) strange thought has come in since the mention of the Father's gift. But if the figure is still continued in this verse, it is only a thin veil that conceals the truth. In ver. 27 the Son of man is He who gives eternal life; here it is the bread of God that giveth life unto the world.—The last word is very significant. The manna had been for 'the fathers;' the true bread is for the world. We are reminded at once of chap. 3: 16: 'God so loved the world,' and of chap. 4: 42: 'the Saviour of the world.' The unlimited offer also recalls chap. 4: 14: 'Whosoever hath drunk of the water that I will give him;' and in both cases the result is the same.

34 the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord,
35 evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them,
I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall
not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never

Ver. 34. **They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.** We cannot see in these words the mere expression of a desire that earthly wants may be satisfied (comp. 4: 15). This would have incurred rebuke (comp. ver. 26), and not led to clearer teaching, such as is found in the coming verses. Jesus, moreover, is not dealing with 'the Jews' (who meet us at ver. 41), but with the multitude—people who were, indeed, no more than half enlightened, but whose minds were not shut against the truth. His words in the following verses are altogether such as He was wont to address to men who truly sought the light, though not fully conscious of what they sought.

Ver. 35. **Jesus saith unto them, I am the bread of life,**—the bread, that is, that contains life in itself, and thus is able to give life unto the world. The Father giveth 'the true bread' (ver. 32) in giving His Son; the Son of man giveth eternal life (ver. 27) in imparting Himself. To this declaration everything has been leading,—the bread of the miracle, the manna, every reproof (ver. 26), every encouragement (ver. 27).—**He that is coming to me shall in no wise hunger.** The original words are chosen with exquisite delicacy. The figure is not that of one who has achieved a toilsome and lengthened journey (as if the words ran, 'he that at length has reached me'), but that of one whose resolve is taken, and who sets out in the right way,—he that 'is coming' unto Jesus shall cease to hunger. Other passages may speak of the disciple as one who *has come* to Jesus; this with equal truth represents him as one who is *coming towards* Jesus, whose aim and desire and constant thoughts are towards his Lord. The hunger of the spirit ceases, the restless want and search for satisfaction are at an end; the 'true bread,' that which gives real sustenance, is received.—**And he that believeth in me shall in no wise ever thirst.** In these words we have an image similar to the last, but not the same. The quenching of thirst is even a stronger figure than the satisfaction of hunger, and thus (as usually in the poetry of the Old Testament) the thought of the second member is an advance upon that of the first. It may seem remarkable that 'ever' is not joined with both members of the verse; but (as the other words also show) the first simply expresses once for all the cessation of hunger,—hunger is at an end; whilst the second suggests the continuous presence of that which banishes thirst. Faith is set forth in both clauses. The first presents it in the simplicity and power of the act of will,—the will turned towards Jesus; the second brings it into prominence as the continuous movement of the soul towards union with Him. It is not right therefore to interpret the 'coming' as part of

36 thirst. But I said unto you, that ye have seen me,
37 and ye believe not. All that which the Father
giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh

the 'believing,' or to take either as denoting a momentary act belonging to the beginning only of the Christian life. Each figure, with a force peculiarly its own, expresses the abiding relation of the true disciple to his Lord; but only by a combination such as is here given could we have vividly presented to us both the *immediate* and the *continuous* satisfaction of spirit which Jesus imparts. There is probably another reason for the introduction of the figure of 'thirst.' It is not with the manna alone that Jesus is now dealing. He had fed the multitude with bread, but the meal at which He entertained them as His guests was designed to be the symbol of the Paschal feast (see the note on ver. 4). It was paternal therefore thus to enlarge the symbols, that this feast may be kept in mind, and the way prepared for the words of later verses (53-56).

Ver. 36. **But I said unto you, that ye have indeed seen me, and believe not.** When had such words been uttered? Certainly the reference is not to chap. 5: 37, spoken in Jerusalem to the Jews, not to the multitude in Galilee. It is not likely that Jesus is speaking of words of censure not recorded in this Gospel: and it is hardly possible to understand the simple expression 'I said unto you' in the sense, 'I would have you know,' 'this is what I would say.' We must take the words as referring to the substance, to the spirit if not the letter, of something previously said in this chapter, and we can do this without any violence of interpretation. It is remarkable that the people themselves have used words almost identical (ver. 30): 'What doest Thou as a sign, that we may *see and believe Thee?*'—that is, may see Thee in Thy working, and believe Thee. This is a confession on their part that as yet they had seen no sign that had led them to see and believe Him. The words of Jesus in ver. 26 imply that in truth they had not seen 'signs:' they had seen His miracles, but these had not so proved themselves to be 'signs' as to lead the people to see and believe Him. The charge, therefore, that 'they seeing saw not' is perfectly equivalent to what is said in that verse; they had indeed seen Him in the works which were the manifestation of Himself, but they had not been led to faith. The charge is very grave, but it is not made in anger, nor does it leave the accused in hopelessness: not judgment, but encouragement, is the spirit that pervades this part of the discourse. Perhaps it is for this very reason that the word is 'I said,' not 'I say.' The fact was so; it may be so still; but the state is one that need not last,—even now it may pass away.

Ver. 37. **All that which the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that is coming to me I will in no wise cast out.** These words have been understood by some as a reproach: 'How different are ye from those whom my Father giveth me!' but such an interpretation is quite inconsistent with the context. At pres-

38 to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come
down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the

ent, indeed, those to whom Jesus speaks are not believers; but even in their case His mission may not be a failure,—they may be given to Him, and He will not cast them out. Up to this point the only gift spoken of has been a gift *to men* (vers. 27, 31, 32, 33, 34), especially the Father's gift of the Son to be the bread of life. Here the converse is suddenly introduced—the Father's gift *to the Son*. What Jesus brings to men is the Father's gift to them: what Jesus receives in the homage and belief and love of men is the Father's gift to Him. The form of expression is remarkable, 'all that which the Father giveth me.' A passage closely akin to this we find in chap. 17, (which has many points of contact with this chapter), and in close connection with the gift which (ver. 27) the Son bestows, the gift of eternal life. The passage is 17: 2: 'As thou has given Him power over all flesh, in order that all that which Thou hast given Him, He may give to them eternal life.' In both these verses the totality of the Father's gift is presented first, and then the individuals who compose this gift and who themselves receive the gift which the Son bestows. The gift of the Father must not be understood by us in the sense of a predestinating decree. Both here and in the other passages of this Gospel where we read of the Father as giving to the Son His people (chaps. 6: 37, 39; 10: 29; 17: 2, 6, 9, 24; 18: 9), it is the moral and spiritual state of the heart that is thought of under the word. This state of heart by which they are prepared to listen to the voice of Jesus is due to God alone. The truth expressed here by 'giving' is expressed in ver. 44 by the 'drawing' of the Father, and in ver. 45 by 'learning' and 'hearing' from Him. Such preparation of heart is necessary; as Chrysostom expresses it, faith in Jesus is 'no chance matter, but one that needs an impulse from above,'—from Him who worketh in us both to will and to work (Phil. 2: 13). The test, then, of this work in the heart is the coming to Christ. The two words 'come' in this verse are different: in the first instance the meaning is 'shall reach me: in the second we might almost render the words 'he that is coming towards me.' What is said on the 35th verse is fully applicable here, for the expression is the same. We cannot read the works without being reminded of the most touching of the Saviour's parables: the prodigal arose and came toward s his father, but when he was yet a great way off his father ran to meet him.

Ver. 38. **Because I have come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.** The previous verse was full of the power and energy of love; but even then Jesus expresses no feeling or purpose of His own as the motive of His acts. He will cast out none, because such is the Father's will, and to do this will He has come down from heaven (comp. ver. 33).—It may be well, however, to observe that a different preposition from that in ver. 33 is here used: here 'from,' for it is the work of Jesus;

39 will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him
that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me
I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the
40 last day. For this is the will of my Father, that
every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on
him, should have eternal life; and [1]I will raise him
up at the last day.

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[1] Or, *that I should raise him up.*

there 'out of,' for it is the heavenliness of His origin that is the prominent thought.

Ver. 39. **And this is the will of him that sent me, that all that which he hath given me, of it I should lose nothing.** Here, as in ver. 37, the gift of the Father is represented in its totality, 'all that which.' As no part of the precious gift to the multitude, the gift which symbolized Himself, must be left to perish (ver. 12), so no part of the still more precious gift of the Father may be lost by the Son.—**But should raise it up at the last day.** Should raise 'it,' the whole, all that is comprehendod in the gift. The 'last day' can denote only one great period of resurrection for the whole Church of God,—again a proof, as in 5: 28, 29, that the teaching of our Lord in this Gospel is not confined to the spiritual aspect of death and resurrection. It is not the gift of eternal life that belongs to the last day. Whosoever receives the Son at once receives in Him life eternal (3: 36; 6: 33-35); but the day of the resurrection of the body witnesses the completion of that gift of eternal life which is now bestowed. In the next verse the present and the future gifts are combined.

Ver. 40. **For this is the will of my Father, that every one which beholdeth the Son and believeth in him should have eternal life, and that I should raise him up at the last day.** This verse is no mere repetition of the last, but differs from it in two important points. As in ver. 37, we pass from the thought of the general body of the church to that of the individual members: in the Father's will every member is embraced. Secondly, the bond of connection with Jesus is viewed from its human rather than from its Divine side. In the last verse Jesus spoke of 'all that which' the Father had given Him; here He speaks of 'every one which beholdeth the Son and believeth in Him.' The word 'beholdeth' is especially noteworthy, clearly showing as it does an act of the will. 'Seeing' may be accidental, may be transcient: he who 'beholds' is willing to stand and gaze on the object presented to his view. The word is full of instruction (comp. 8: 51; 12: 45; 14: 17; 17: 24).

At this point our Lord's discourse is interrupted. Hitherto He has been addressing the multitude: now, for the first time in this chapter, we are to read of 'the Jews,' *i. e.* (as we have observed in earlier chapters) adherents of the ruling party which was

41 The Jews therefore murmured concerning him,
because he said, I am the bread which came down
42 out of heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the
son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?
how doth he now say, I am come down out of

violently hostile to us. Whether these Jews were amongst the multitude hitherto addressed in this discourse we cannot tell. If so, they had occupied no prominent place, but were lost in the crowd. But, as there is nothing to show that the paragraph which follows this verse relates to the same day, it is very possible that the Jews were not present at the miracle or when Jesus spoke of the bread of life, but were afterwards informed of His words. This latter supposition becomes more probable as we look into the circumstances. We know that on the day of the feeding of the multitude the Passover was at hand (ver. 4); and we cannot doubt that, however anxious the enemies of our Lord might be to linger near Him, that they might catch Him in His talk, they would scrupulously observe the ritual of the feast. If we turn to Mark, we find two passages that distinctly speak of scribes who came down from Jerusalem to Galilee: one of these passages (iii. 22) belongs to a date somewhat earlier than that of the events related in this chapter, the other (7 : 1) comes in shortly after the narrative of Christ's walking on the sea of Galilee. The same remarks apply to the Gospel of Matthew. It seems probable, therefore, that these agents of the hostile and influential party in Jerusalem hastened back to Galilee after the Passover, to resume their machinations against the prophet whom they both hated and feared.

Ver. 41. **The Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.** The 'murmuring' denotes more than that indistinct complaining to which we generally apply the word. The frequent and indignant expressions of discontent by the Israelites when journeying in the desert are expressed by the same word in the Septuagint, and this (comp. 1 Cor. 10 : 10) seems to have fixed its meaning in the New Testament. The Jews did not complain in the presence of Jesus, but sought to foment discontent and ill-feeling amongst those who at the time had been willing hearers of His words. It is characteristic of the spirit and motives of these enemies of our Lord that their charge against Him is put in the most captious form. As in the very similar case related in chap. 5 : 12, the words of nobler meaning are as far as possible left out: nothing is said about 'the bread of life' or 'the bread of God.' Indeed the bread is a mere link of connection, dropped as soon as it has served to introduce the words joined with it, to which they can (as they think) attach a charge of falsehood. On the offer of life, eternal life, they will not dwell.

Ver. 42. **And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I have come down out of heaven?** At this time, then, it is clear that Jesus was generally regarded as Joseph's son: the calumnies which at a later period were current amongst the Jews had not yet been resorted to. The words of the Jews do not im-

43 heaven? Jesus answered and said unto them, Mur-
44 mur not among yourselves. No man can come to
me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and
45 I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in
the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.
Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath

ply that Joseph was still living, as the word rendered 'know' may simply denote their being acquainted with a fact,—they knew that Joseph and Mary were His parents. We need not wonder that they are ignorant of the miraculous conception.

Ver. 43. **Jesus answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.** For such murmurers Jesus has only reproof. It is very strange that in our day some writers on this Gospel should have had difficulty in understanding why Jesus did not refute the objection raised by declaring the truth of the miraculous conception. Men who could so mutilate His words as practically to pervert their meaning would have been brought no nearer to conviction by such a statement, however made, but would have gathered from it material for still more malicious accusation. At first the reply of Jesus deals only with the spirit His opponents manifest.

Ver. 44. **No man can come to me except the Father which sent me shall have drawn him.** In these words He would tell them that (as their unbelief and resistance show) they have not that *special* divine teaching without which they cannot understand Him. Hence He speaks not of the 'drawing' of God, but of that of the 'Father who sent' Him. Only like can understand like. It is as the Father of the Son that God works in us that spirit in which the Son can be received by us. The 'drawing' is not precisely the same as the 'giving' of ver. 37, but describes, so to speak, the first stage of the 'giving;' he that 'hath been drawn' by the Father is he that is given to the Son.—**And I will raise him up at the last day.** As the initiative of salvation belongs to the Father, the completion is the work of the Son. The Father draws and entrusts; the Son receives, keeps, imparts life, until the glorious consummation, the final resurrection. Between these two extreme terms 'draw' and 'raise up' is included all the development of the spiritual life (Godet).

Ver. 45. **It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.** Jesus confirms His word by a testimony from the Old Testament, not now taken from the Law (comp. ver. 31), but from the Prophets. The use of the plural 'prophets' has been thought to prove that the reference does not belong to any one passage; and we may certainly say, that an inclusive expression like this may have been used designedly, as implying that there are many such promises, and that this tone of promise is characteristic of the book of the Prophets. Still the word which introduces the quotation, 'And,' a word quite needless for the Speaker's purpose, shows con-

46 learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is from God, he hath

clusively that the quotation is direct. There can be no doubt that the words are taken from Isa. 54: 13, with one or two slight alterations. They describe the great and general privilege of Messianic times. The retention of the words 'thy children' (addressed to Jerusalem in Isa. 54: 13) might have seemed to limit the promise, which, belonging to the 'latter days,' is really free from all such limitations. It has been suggested (by Godet) that the synagogue lesson for the day (see ver. 59) may have included these very words (comp. Luke 4: 17–21). Be this as it may (and there is no improbability in the conjecture), the quotation was well known, and carries out and illustrates the words of ver. 44. The truth of that verse is set in a new light—presented on its human rather than on its Divine side. The 'drawing' is a 'teaching:' he that hath been drawn by the Father is he that hath truly received the teaching of the Father. —**Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.** Such true reception of the teaching is emphatically described in these words. Two stages in human experience, implied in the successful result of teaching, are separated from each other. All who hear may also learn; but many hear who will not heed, and therefore cannot learn; just as there are many who see the Son, but will not remain to 'behold the Son' and to 'believe in Him' (ver. 40). These varied expressions illustrate one another with wonderful beauty and power. Not one allows us to think of compulsion or the forcing of man's will: all with one voice give glory to the Father as the source of every impulse towards the light and the life. The variety of expressions used by Jesus in the inculcation of this truth, so characteristic of the present chapter, may well remind us of the variety of the means employed by the Father in the prosecution of the work. Thus the 'drawing' may present to our thought especially an inward influence; the 'teaching' may suggest the application of Scripture truth; whilst the 'giving' brings into view the final act of the Father when the design of His love has been fulfilled. But while each term may lead us to think most of one aspect of the Father's work, every term really includes all its aspects, and denotes the whole work.

Ver. 46. **Not that any one hath seen the Father, save he which is from God, he hath seen the Father.** The words just spoken: 'he that hath heard from the Father,' might be understood to point to a direct communication: this, however, would imply a close relation to the Father, such as is possessed by One alone who hath 'seen the Father.' His saying that all who come to Him have first 'heard from the Father' might lead His hearers to infer that the descent out of heaven likewise implied nothing more than could be said of all. Such an inference this verse is intended to preclude.

47 seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He
48 that believeth hath eternal life. I am the bread of
49 life. Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilder-
50 ness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh

If they would really be 'taught' of the Father, it can only be through Him.

Ver. 47. **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.** In the preceding verses Jesus has rebuked the murmuring of the Jews. They had not opened their hearts to the Father's teaching, or their difficulty would have disappeared. He now returns to the truths out of which His foes had drawn their indictment against His truthfulness. First, however, He brings into relief those sayings which they had passed over entirely. The solemn formula: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you,' to be followed by a higher at ver. 53, at once marks the transition, and shows the importance of the truth declared. In speaking to the multitude (ver. 26), His first words had related to eternal life, and to the paramount necessity of faith (ver. 29). So here also; but the assertion is made in the briefest possible form. Even the object of the faith is left unexpressed, that the thought may entirely rest on the state of faith itself: the believer in the very act and condition of faith has eternal life. It is not often that Jesus speaks thus, omitting the words 'in me' or 'in the Son;' but there could be no real ambiguity in the present instance, and He desires to express in the most forcible manner the state of mind which formed the strongest possible contrast to that of the Jews.

Ver. 48. **I am the bread of life.** Having prepared the way by the declaration of the necessity of faith, He reaffirms what (in ver. 35) He had said of Himself. He is the bread which contains life in itself, and which therefore can give and does give life to all who receive and assimilate it.—It is interesting to observe, at a point where the discourse is really higher than it was before, a *shortening* of the formula employed, similar to that already met by us in 1: 29 and 36 (see note on 1: 35, 36).

Ver. 49. **Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and died.** No other bread has given life eternal. Even the manna, the bread given out of heaven, did not bestow life on their fathers, who (as the people themselves had said) ate the manna in the wilderness. It seems very probable that the addition 'in the wilderness' is more than a mere repetition of the words of ver. 31. It recalls Num. 14: 35; Ps. 95: 8-11, and other passages, in which 'the wilderness' is specially mentioned as the scene of disobedience and of death; and thus the fathers, who (Deut. 1: 32) 'did not believe the Lord' and died, are contrasted with the believer who 'hath eternal life' (ver. 47).

Ver. 50. **This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that any one may eat thereof, and not die.** The

down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and
51 not die. I am the living bread which came down
out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall
live forever: yea and the bread which I will give is
my flesh, for the life of the world.

'bread that cometh down out of heaven' (repeated from ver. 33) is of such a nature, and has such an object, that one may eat of it and not die. We are not to press too much our Lord's use of 'one' or 'any one' in this verse; but we may at least say that his studious avoidance of every word of limitation points once more to the unbounded offer of life, the offer to 'the world' (ver. 33). When verses 49 and 50 are compared, a difficulty presents itself. It may be said that the antithesis is not complete, for is not *death* used in two different senses? The fathers *died* in the wilderness: he that eateth of the true bread shall not *die*. There is exactly the same two-fold use of the word in chap. 11: 26 (see the note on that verse). It is sufficient here to say that in neither verse is the meaning as simple as the objection supposes. In ver. 49 we must certainly recognize a partial reference to death as a punishment of sin, and by consequence to that moral death which even in this world must ever accompany sin. In ver. 50 again physical death may seem to be excluded; but we shall see that John elsewhere regards the believer as freed (in a certain sense) even from this, so entirely has death for him changed its character; so complete is the deliverance granted by his Lord.

Ver. 51. **I am the living bread which came down out of heaven.** Once more Jesus declares that the bread of which He has spoken is Himself; but the assertion is expressed in words that differ significantly from those before employed. For 'the bread of life' He says now 'the living bread;' for 'cometh down,' an expression which might seem a mere figure denoting heavenly origin, He says 'came down,' speaking of an actual historical descent out of heaven. The former change especially is important. He has been speaking of the bread as given, but is about to declare Himself to be the Giver: therefore He says that He is the living bread, that can give itself, and with itself its inherent life. There was nothing in the 'bread *of life*' that would necessarily suggest more than means and instrument. If the tree of life in Paradise bestowed immortality on man, it was but by instrumental efficacy. 'The living bread' is a thought absolutely unique, and the words compel the minds of the hearers to rest on the person of the Speaker, who in the possession of this life, and not as the precious but lifeless manna, descended out of heaven.—**If any one shall have eaten of this bread, he shall live forever.** These words partly repeat and partly extend those of the preceding verse. There the nature and object of the bread are given; here the assurance that every one who makes trial of the promise shall certainly find it fulfilled to him in the gift of a life that lasts forever.—

52 The Jews therefore strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?
53 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves.
54 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.
55 For my flesh is [1]meat indeed, and my blood is [2]drink

[1] Gr. *true meat.*

[2] Gr. *true drink.*

**And moreover the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.** The personal significance of the preceding words is now made even more direct, and the meaning intended cannot probably be mistaken. He gives; the bread He gives is His flesh; the gift is for the life of the world. The questions which these words have raised will be best considered in connection with our Lord's own comment in the following verses.

Ver. 52. **The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?** As before, the Jews take hold of those words which are most susceptible of a merely material sense. Every one that points to a spiritual meaning they ignore; but in doing so, they themselves give evidence of the clearness with which our Lord had now shown that His intention had been to fix the whole thought of His hearers on Himself, and not on His gifts. The contention of the Jews became violent as they talked of the words of Jesus: the Evangelist's expression, literally taken, points to 'fighting' rather than strife (comp. Acts 7: 26; 2 Tim. 2: 24; Jas. 4: 2).

Vers. 53, 54, 55. **Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye have eaten the flesh of the Son of man, and drunk his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.** As to the general meaning of this important passage, there can be little or no doubt. There are some new expressions, but on the whole the imagery agrees with that employed in the earlier part of the chapter, and the blessings offered by Jesus are described again in identical language. Here, as before, life, eternal life, is promised; again 'eating' is the figure which describes the mode of receiving life; as in vers. 35, 48 and 51, Jesus identifies Himself with that which when eaten gives life; and, as in ver. 44 (comp. vers. 39 and 40), He promises that He will raise up at the last day every one who has thus received eternal life The agreement then between these verses and the earlier part of the discourse is so marked that there can be no change in the general sense: all the expressions in previous verses in which figure is wholly or partially set aside may be brought in here also to elucidate the meaning. Our Lord therefore still teaches in regard to all who come to Him, who believe in Him, who are intimately joined to Him in the union of faith, and, receiving all from Him, may be said to appropriate to themselves Himself, and to feed on Him—that these, and these alone, have eternal life. There is nothing here that alters this foundation truth. The phraseology of these verses (and ver. 51) is new in the following respects: (1) Instead of the one metaphor of eating we have two, 'eating' and 'drinking; (2) The figure of bread is dropped, giving place to 'flesh,' 'the flesh of the Son of man,' which flesh is given by Him for the life of the world. (3) For the first time Jesus makes mention of His 'blood,'—the drinking of this blood gives life. The introduction of the second metaphor, 'drinking,' at once recalls ver. 35, where 'thirst' is as suddenly brought in. As in that verse, so here, one purpose answered is the more complete realization of a feast: the Paschal meal is always present in the symbols of this chapter. Whether this is to be taken as the only purpose will depend on the answer given to other questions which must be asked. Does Jesus, in speaking of His flesh given for the life of the world, expressly refer to His death, His atoning death? Is it in order to point more clearly to that truth that He here brings in the mention of His blood? Are we to understand that there is a strict and real *difference* between the things signified by eating His flesh and drinking His blood? The last question may easily be answered: there is certainly no such difference. In ver. 35 there is a very beautiful and rapid change of aspect, but no substantial change of thought: coming to Christ is believing in Him, and the result is the satisfaction of every want, whether represented as hunger or as thirst. When the flesh is first mentioned (ver. 51) it stands alone, as the Saviour's gift for the life of the world; and below (ver. 57) 'eating' alone is spoken of, yet the result is life. As a rule, indeed, flesh is *contrasted* with blood in biblical language, and the two are joined together to express the physical being of man; but it is not uncommon to find flesh used by itself in this sense. Thus in the first chapter of this Gospel we read that 'the Word was made flesh,' whereas in Heb. 2: 14 we are taught that the Son took part in flesh and blood. It is therefore quite in accordance with the usage of Scripture that the same idea should be expressed now by the one term and now by the two combined; and the context (as we have seen) shows that this is the case here. The two expressions of these verses are thus substantially equivalent to the one expression of ver. 57. But it does not follow from this that our Lord had no special motive for thus varying His language. The cardinal thought is most simply expressed in ver. 57, 'he that eateth me;' and we may well believe that He would have so spoken in these verses also had He not intended to suggest special thoughts by the use of other words. In asking now what these special thoughts are, it is scarcely possible for us, in the light of events that followed, to dissociate the last clause of ver. 51

from the thought of death, or the mention of 'the blood' of the Son of man from the thought of the blood shed upon the cross. The words, indeed, would not at that time suggest such thoughts: they were rather a secret prophecy, like the mysterious sayings of chap. 2 : 19 ('Destroy this Temple') and chap. 3 : 14 ('even so must the Son of man be lifted up'), and that saying so often repeated in the earlier Gospels, the command to 'take up' and to 'bear' 'the cross.' But this Gospel shows most plainly that the end was ever present to Jesus from the very beginning; and many of His words can only receive their proper interpretation by the application of this principle. There is another consideration which removes all doubt in this place, if the general view which has been taken of the chapter is correct. The figurative acts and language have been suggested by the Paschal meal which has just been (or about to be) celebrated in Jerusalem. The later chapters of the Gospel set forth Jesus as the fulfilment of the Passover, Jesus on the cross as the antitype and reality of the Paschal meal. This chapter in pointing to the type points continually to the fulfilment; but the Paschal lamb died, and the death of Jesus must therefore be regarded as part of the thought before us. Nor would it be safe to deny that mention of the blood here may even be connected, as some have supposed, with the command that the blood of the Paschal lamb should be sprinkled on the dwellings of the Israelites. So many are the links between symbol and reality which the Evangelist apprehends both in his own teaching and in the discourses received by him, that it is less hazardous to admit than to deny the possibility of such a connection. But even then the thought of blood shed upon the cross must not be kept separate and distinct from all else that Jesus was and did. The central thought of the chapter is undoubtedly that of a meal, a feast, an experimental reception of a living Christ which is symbolized by 'eating' and 'drinking;' and to that the whole interpretation must be subordinated. It cannot therefore be Jesus in His death, looked at as a distinct and separate act, that is before us in the mention of the blood. It must still be Jesus in the whole of His manifestation of Himself, living, dying, glorified; so that, if we may so speak, the death is to be viewed only as a pervading element of the life, only as one of the characteristics of that Christ who, not as divided but in all the combined elements of His humiliation and His glory, is from first to last the object of our faith and the satisfaction of our need. The main point, in short, to be kept in view is this, that we are here dealing with the actual nourishment, with the sustenance, with the *life* of the soul; with the believer, not as having only certain relations altered in which he stands to God, but as in fellowship and communion of spirit with Him in whom he believes. To maintain by faith that fellowship with Jesus *in all that He was*, is to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. It may be accepted as an additional proof of the correctness of what has been said, if we observe that the very same blessings now connected with eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus have been already connected with 'coming to Him,' with 'believing in Him,' and with 'beholding Him.' Thus for the first of these, comp. vers. 35 and 55; for the second, vers. 47 and 54; for the third, vers. 40 and 54. It is clear, therefore, that the spiritual appropriation of the life and death of Jesus is described under all the different figures of this passage. All tell us of communion, of fellowship, of a feast,—of the Lamb of God not only as the Paschal sacrifice, but as the Paschal feast. The question now considered leads at once to another. *What is the relation of these verses and this whole discourse to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?* Many have held that the doctrine of the sacrament (not yet instituted, but present to the Redeemer's mind) is the very substance of this chapter; whilst others have denied that there is any connection whatever between the two. We can adopt neither of these extreme views. On the one hand, the words of Jesus in this discourse can belong to no rite or ordinance, however exalted and however precious to His people. The act of which He speaks is continuous, not occasional, —spiritual, not external; every term that He employs is a symbol of trust in Him. But on the other hand, if alike in this chapter and in the records of the Last Supper the Paschal meal is presented to our thought, and if John specially connects this feast with the death of Christ, whilst all the other Evangelists bring into relief the relation of the Last Supper to the same death, it is impossible to say that the sacrament is altogether alien to this discourse. The relation of the Lord's Supper to the teaching of this chapter is very nearly the same as the relation of Christian baptism to our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus (see note on chap. 3: 5). In neither case is the sacrament *as such* brought before us; in both we must certainly recognise the presence of its fundamental idea. This discourse is occupied with that lasting, continuous act of which afterwards the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was made a symbol; and the sacrament is still a symbol of the unchanging truth so fully set forth in this discourse,—the believer's union with his Lord, his complete dependence upon Him for life, his continued appropriation by faith of His very self, his feeding on Him, living on Him, his experience that Jesus in giving Himself satisfies every want of the soul. There is not much in the particular expressions of these three verses that calls for further remark. It will be observed that there are two links connecting them with our Lord's first address to the multitude (ver. 26): He again speaks of the 'Son of man,' and the words 'food indeed' (literally 'true eating') at once recall 'the eating that abideth.' One expression in ver. 53 is very forcible, 'Ye have not life in yourselves,' implying as it does, that they who have so eaten and drunk have life in themselves. These are words which our Lord could not use without intending a special emphasis (comp. chap. 5: 26): so complete is the believer's appropriation of the Son, who hath life in Himself, that the same exalted language may be used of the believer also, whilst he abides in fellowship with his Lord. Then he has life *in* himself, but not *of* himself. This fellowship is the substance of the next verse.

56 indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my
57 blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living
Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so
he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.
58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven:
not as the fathers did eat, and died: he that eateth
59 this bread shall live for ever. These things said he
in [1]the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.
60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard

[1] Or, *a synagogue.*

Ver. 56. **He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.** The fellowship consists in this, that the believer abides in the life, and that He who is the Life abides in the believer. Not that here it is not 'hath eaten;' the 'abiding' is dependent on the continuance of the appropriating act.

Ver. 57. **As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.** He that sent the Son into the world is the living Father,—the Being who is eternally and absolutely the Living One. The Son lives because the Father lives. This reception of life (see chap. 5: 26) is the characteristic of the Son. So, with a relation to the Son similar to the Son's relation to the Father, the believer who receives and appropriates the Son lives because the Son, who is Life, abides in him. This is the climax of the whole discourse: for even more exalted language expressive of the same truth, that the relation between Jesus and His own has its pattern in the relation between the Father and the Son, see chap. 17: 21, 23.

Ver. 58. **This is that bread which came down out of heaven.** Here Jesus returns to the first theme. Since He has now set forth all that the true bread gives, the contrast with the manna is complete. 'This'—of this nature, such as I have described it to you—'is the bread that came down out of heaven.' These last words illustrate the first clause of ver. 57, 'the living Father *sent me.*'—**Not as your fathers did eat and died: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.** The rest of the verse is in the main a forcible repetition of vers. 49, 50.

Ver. 59. **These things said he, as he was teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum.** These words not only give information as to the place in which the discourse (probably vers. 41-58; see note on ver. 40) was delivered, but also show the boldness with which Jesus declared truths so new and so surprising to His hearers. He spoke thus in public teaching (comp. chap. 18: 20), and that too in the presence of His powerful enemies, and in the place where their influence was greatest.

Ver. 60. **Many therefore of his disciples when they**

*this*, said, This is a hard saying: who can hear [1]it?
61 But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Doth this cause you
62 to stumble? *What* then if ye should behold the Son
63 of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit,

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[1] Or, *him*.

**heard this said, This is a hard saying; who can hear him?** The word 'disciples' is here used in a wide sense, including many more than the Twelve, and many who had never risen to a high and pure faith. The 'saying' can only be that of the preceding verses (53-57), and its hardness consisted in the fact that it pointed out one only way to life,—eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man. These words the disciples did not spiritually comprehend, and therefore they were repelled by them.

Ver. 61. **But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured concerning this, said unto them, Doth this make you to stumble?** He knew their thoughts, and because they are disciples, not Jews bent on opposing Him, He seeks to help them.

Ver. 62. **What then if ye behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?** The meaning of this ascent is surely clear in itself; but if it were not, the mention of a past *descent* (vers. 41, 51, 58) would remove all doubt. Our Lord certainly refers to His ascension into heaven. He would say: 'Is the word that speaks of the descent from heaven, of the living bread that alone can give life, of the Son's descent from heaven to give His flesh and His blood that the world may eat and drink and live, a stumbling-block to you? If, when I am here before you, you cannot understand what is meant by eating my flesh and drinking my blood,—cannot apprehend the spiritual meaning which such words must bear,—how much more will you, in this your carnal apprehension of what I say, be made to stumble if you should see me ascending where I was before, to be no longer upon earth at all!' As the necessity of eating His flesh must continue, what will they think then? Then the sense they have put upon His words will indeed wholly break down: then at last they may come to see that the words can only be spiritually understood.

Ver. 63. **It is the spirit that maketh to live; the flesh profiteth nothing.** Jesus has spoken of 'giving life,' of the 'eating of His flesh,' as the means of gaining eternal life. In all this He has not the flesh but the spirit in view,—not the material reception of the flesh by the flesh, but the appropriation of His spirit by the spirit of man. Such spiritual union of the believer with Him alone 'maketh to live:' the flesh in itself is profitless for such an end.—**The words**

64 and are life. But there are some of you that believe
not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they
were that believed not, and who it was that should
65 betray him. And he said, For this cause have I said
unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be
given unto him of the Father.
66 Upon this many of his disciples went back, and

**that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.** The word 'I' is emphatic, as it repeatedly has been in this discourse. The emphasis which Jesus here and elsewhere lays upon His sayings is very remarkable. He is the Word, the expression of the Father's nature and will; His sayings are to man the expression of Himself. The words or sayings just spoken to these disciples are spirit and are life. This is their essential nature. They may be carnalised, wrongly understood, wilfully perverted; but wherever they find an entrance they manifest their true nature. They bring into the receptive heart not the flesh but the spirit of the Son of man, and thus the man, and in the true sense eating the flesh of the Son of man, has life. His words received by faith bring Himself. Thus He can in two verses almost consecutive (chap. 15: 4, 7) say, 'abide in me, and *I* in you,' and 'If ye abide in me, and *my words* abide in you.'

Ver. 64. **But there are some of you that believe not.** Even of these who had heard the last words, so mercifully spoken for the removal of their difficulties, there were some who continued in unbelief.—**For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that would betray him.** Another remarkable declaration by the Evangelist of the Saviour's penetrating discernment of all hearts (compare chap. 2: 24, 25), and of His knowledge from the very beginning what would be the end of His earthly course. The words seem to imply that the germ of the traitor-spirit was already in the heart of Judas, who, like many others, loved rather the glory and honor which Jesus set aside (vers. 14, 15) than the spirit and the life of His words.

Ver. 65. **And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no one can come unto me, except it have been given unto him of the Father.** They had seemed genuine disciples; but His words had been to them a stumbling block, and had not brought life. They had not really come to Him: they had not received from the Father the gift of 'coming unto' Jesus, but the failure had been by their own fault. Having resisted the drawing of the Father, they had lacked the due preparation of heart for receiving the words of Jesus (see the notes on vers. 37 and 44).

Ver. 66. **Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no longer with him.** Another sad reflection, as in ver. 64: the Evangelist cannot but record the repelling influence which light exerted on those who were not of the light. These disciples

67 walked no more with him. Jesus said therefore unto
68 the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter
answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou
69 [1]hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.
70 Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve,

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[1] Or, *hast words.*

seemed to have left all that they might be followers of Christ; but now they return to the homes and the occupations they had forsaken. (The usual rendering 'walked no more' is in itself perfectly correct, but may be possibly understood in the sense of 'never more,' a sense certainly not designed.)

Ver. 67. **Jesus therefore said unto the twelve, Would ye also go?** In contrast with the desertion of many is the strengthened faith of those who, being of the light, are attracted by the light. The 'Twelve' are here mentioned by John for the first time.

Vers. 68, 69. **Simon Peter answered him.** In accordance with the earlier records Peter stands forth as the spokesman of the Twelve, and in answer to the question of Jesus makes a confession of their faith.—**Lord, to whom shall we go away? thou hast words of eternal life.** (Ver. 69). **And we have believed, and we know that thou art the Holy One of God.** The confession consists of three parts: (1) 'Thou hast words of eternal life' (see ver. 63); (2) 'And we have believed' (in contrast with ver. 64, 'there are of you some that believe not'); (3) 'And we know,' etc. These disciples have answered the revelation of Jesus by the faith which it demands; and now they 'know' with the practical knowledge of experience that Jesus is the Son of God. The expression which Peter uses is 'the Holy One of God.' A similar phrase occurs in Ps. 106: 16 in regard to Aaron, who is called 'the holy one of Jehovah.' In the case of the human priest and in that of his antitype, our Lord, the general meaning is the same—the *consecrated one* of God, or, in other words, He whom the Father sealed, He whom God has sent. The meaning of the word used here, 'holy,' must receive special consideration in other passages: see the notes on 10: 36; 17: 17. It is hardly necessary to say, that the confession of Peter does not seem to be the same as that related in Matt. 16.

Ver. 70. **Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve? and one of you is a devil.** Alas! even in this small circle there is an element that the light attracts not, but repels. In good faith Peter had spoken of all his brethren, when he said: 'we have believed.' He knew not, and probably Judas himself knew not, to whom Jesus referred. The germ of the future crime, and that alone, as yet existed. But from the beginning Jesus knew all. Amongst the disciples He knew who would desert Him: in this inner

71 and one of you is a devil? Now he spake of Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him, *being* one of the twelve.

## CHAPTER 7: 1-13.

### *Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

1 And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews

circle He knew who would show himself a traitor—'a devil.' Many weaker interpretations, but all baseless, have been given of this word. The traitor will do his work at the instigation of the Evil One, and animated by his spirit: his work will be the work of the devil: he himself in doing it will be the associate of Satan; nay, as we shall see, he will be more.

Ver. 71. **Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot.** Here we meet for the first time in this Gospel with the name Iscariot; and it will be observed that (as in 13: 26) it is connected not with the name of Judas (as in 12: 4; 13: 2; 14: 22), but with that of his father. In all probability the word signifies 'man of Kerioth,' a town in the tribe of Judah (see Josh. 15: 25). Apparently Judas was the only apostle not of Galilee, and the peculiarity of his name (identical with Judah and 'the Jews') is certainly not overlooked by the Evangelist. Nay, more, not only is Judas of Kerioth, that town of Judah and the Jews, his father is so too. The double link of connection seems to deepen the thought.—**For he it was that was about to betray him—one of the twelve.** Judas was not yet the traitor; 'was about to' expresses only the futurity of the event; but how much is the criminality of the germ already springing up in his heart heightened by the closing remark, in which we see at once the anger and the pathos of the Evangelist—'being one of the Twelve!'

### *Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles*, vers. 1–13.

CONTENTS.—The same line of thought as that which we have found in the two previous chapters is continued in that before us. He who is the Fulfiller of the Sabbath and of the Passover is the Fulfiller also of the great feast in which the festivals of the Jewish year culminated—that of Tabernacles. The first section of the chapter gives an account of the circumstances in which Jesus went up to this feast, the subordinate parts being—(I) vers. 1–9, Jesus declines to go up to it at the request of His brethren, for He can act only at the suggestion of His heavenly Father's will; (2) vers. 10–13, He goes up when He sees that the hour for doing so is come.

Ver. 1. **And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill him.** The events of chap. 6 belonged to the period of the

2 sought to kill him. Now the feast of the Jews, the

Passover; chap. 7 is occupied with the Feast of Tabernacles. The interval covered by the brief description of this verse, therefore, is about six months. During that time Jesus 'was walking in Galilee,' for in Judæa His enemies 'were seeking to kill Him.' As it is John himself who gives the notes of time from which we learn the length of this period, we have here another illustration of the selective principle on which his Gospel is composed. The ministry in Galilee is in the main passed over, partly, no doubt, because the Evangelist well knew that the types of Gospel teaching that were most widely current chiefly presented the Saviour's work in Galilee: partly, because this work was less closely connected with his purpose to bring out with clearness the progress and development of the conflict between Jesus and the representatives of the Jewish people. The period before us receives a lengthened notice in two of the earlier Gospels. We may, with great probability, refer to it four chapters in Matthew (15–18), three in Mark (7–9), besides half of the ninth chapter in Luke. To it, therefore, belong our Lord's visits to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, the miracles wrought for the Syrophœnician woman and for the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis, the feeding of the four thousand, Peter's second confession followed by our Lord's announcement of His approaching sufferings and death, the Transfiguration, together with other miracles and discourses. The principal outward characteristics of this portion of our Lord's public ministry are the wider range of His travels and the comparative privacy which He seems usually to have maintained: the progress in the training of the Twelve, which is most observable, we may also in great measure connect with the retirement thus sought by their Master.

Ver. 2. **And the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand.** This annual festival, the last of the three at which the men of Israel were required to present themselves before the Lord in Jerusalem, began on the 15th of Tizri, that is, either late in September or early in October. It had a twofold significance, being at once a harvest festival and a historical memorial of the earliest days of the nation. At the 'feast of Ingathering' (Ex. 23: 16) the people gave thanks for the harvest, now safely gathered in: the 'feast of Tabernacles,' during the seven days of which they dwelt in booths or huts, recalled the years which their fathers spent in the desert (Lev. 23: 39-43). The mode in which the feast was celebrated must be noticed in connection with later verses (see note on ver. 38): here we need only add that this festival, spoken of by Josephus as 'the holiest and greatest' of all, was a season of the most lively rejoicing (see Neh. 8: 16-18), and was associated at once with the most precious recollections of the past and the most sacred hopes for the future of the nation. In particular, as we shall see more fully hereafter, the feast had come to be regarded as the type and emblem of the glory of the latter day, when the Spirit of God should be poured out like floods

3 feast of tabernacles, was at hand. His brethren
therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into
Judæa, that thy disciples also may behold thy works
4 which thou doest, For no man doeth anything in

upon the ground (Isa. 35). On the expression 'feast of the Jews,' see the notes on chap. 2: 13; 6: 4. To what extent the joyous and holy feast of the Lord could be perverted by the malice and hatred of 'the Jews' this chapter will clearly show.

Ver. 3. **His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest.** His brothers, in thus urging Him to depart into Judæa, have distinctly in mind (as appears from ver. 8) the approaching feast and the concourse of people which would soon be assembling in Jerusalem. It is important to keep this in mind if we would understand the position occupied by the brothers of Jesus. They were not believers in Him (ver. 5), that is, they did not accept Him as the Messiah; in their own words they separated themselves from the number of His disciples (ver. 3); and as yet they were accounted by Him as belonging to 'the world' (ver. 7). On the other hand, there is no trace of disbelief or disparagement of His works; for the words, 'Thy works that Thou doest,' were not spoken in irony; and 'if Thou doest' (ver. 4) need not express the slightest doubt. To these 'brethren,' then, brought up in the prevalent Messianic belief, there appeared an inconsistency between the loftiest of His claims and the comparatively limited display of what He offered as His credentials; the reserve with which He manifested His powers went far with them towards destroying the impressions made by His miracles. But one of the chief festivals was now at hand. Neither at the Passover of this year nor at the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) had He gone up to Jerusalem: why should He avoid publicity, and appear to shun that decisive testing of His claims which was possible in Jerusalem alone. By 'Thy disciples,' the brethren of Jesus do not simply mean 'Thy disciples in Judæa.' In this case the word 'there' must have been inserted as bearing the chief emphasis of the sentence. As we have just seen, the recent labors of Jesus in northern Galilee had been marked by privacy. For the most part the Twelve only had witnessed His works; at times some even of these had been excluded. At the feast the whole body of His disciples would be gathered together, and what might be done in Jerusalem would be conspicuous to all.—On the 'brothers' of the Lord see the note on chap. 2: 12; after this paragraph (vers. 3, 5, 10), they are not mentioned again in this Gospel; in chap. 20: 17 the words have a different meaning.

Ver. 4. **For no one doeth any thing in secret, and himself seeketh to be in boldness.** 'To be in boldness' may seem a singular expression; the Greek words, however, will not ad-

secret, [1]and himself seeketh to be known openly.
If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the
5 world. For even his brethren did not believe on him.
6 Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *and seeketh it to be known openly.*

mit of the rendering 'to be known openly;' and it is clear that the form of the phrase is chosen so as to be in correspondence with what precedes, 'doeth anything in secret.' The Greek word rendered 'boldness' occurs nine times in this Gospel, four times in John's First Epistle, and eighteen times in the rest of the New Testament. In every case it denotes either boldness, as opposed to fear or caution (see vers 13, 26; 11 : 54; 18: 20), or plainness of language as opposed to reserve (chap. 10: 24; 11: 14; 16: 25, 29); here the meaning is 'to take a bold position.' Working miracles in secret and a bold claim of personal dignity and office are, in the view of these men, things incompatible with one another.—**If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.** These words are very remarkable. The brothers would use them as 'meaning 'to all men,' *i. e.* 'to all Israel' gathered together at the feast (com. chap. 12: 19); but we cannot doubt that the Evangelist sees here the language of unconscious prophecy, such as appears in many other places of this Gospel, and in one case at least (chap. 11: 51) is expressly noted by himself. The words are now uttered with a true instinct; they will be fulfilled in their widest sense.

Ver. 5. **For not even did his brethren believe in him.** This verse seems to afford an unanswerable argument against those who hold that amongst these 'brothers' of our Lord were included two or three of the twelve apostles. How long this unbelief lasted we cannot tell: the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 15: 7, 'Then He appeared to James,' make it very probable that it was by our Lord's resurrection from the dead that the brothers were led to a true belief in that Divine mission which, in spite of the earlier miracles they had witnessed, they had refused to accept.

Ver. 6. **Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet present, but your time is always ready.** The answer is remarkably akin to that address to His mother in chap. 2: 4. Very different, probably, were the mother and the brethren in their measure of faith, and in the motive of their words; but in each case there betrayed itself a conviction that Jesus might be influenced by human counsel in the manifestations of Himself. Here as there His time was at hand, but not yet 'present;' and until the moment appointed by the Father He whose will is one with that of the Father can do nothing. Such limitation did not apply to His brethren; they were not separated from the 'world,' and with that world they might at any time associate.

7 yet come; but your time is alway ready. The
world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because
8 I testify of it, that its works are evil. Go ye up
unto the feast: I go not up [1]yet* unto this feast; be-
9 cause my time is not yet fulfilled. And having
said these things unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.
10 But when his brethren were gone up unto the
feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it

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[1] Many ancient authorities omit *yet*.

* For "I go not up yet" read "I go not up" and change the marg. to Many ancient authorities add *yet*.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 7. **The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I bear witness concerning it, that its works are wicked.** Jesus takes up the word which they had used; but in His mouth it has a depth of solemn meaning of which they knew nothing. With them the world was the whole body of Israelites, with whom lay the acceptance or rejection of His claims, with Him the world was a hostile power, to which indeed He will manifest Himself, but which He has come to subdue. Jesus and His brothers stand in opposite relations to the world,—they at one with it, He the Reprover of its wicked works. This difference of relation makes necessary a difference of action: they cannot understand, much less can they guide, His course.

Ver. 8. **Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled.** The words 'not yet' imply an intention of attending the festival, though as yet the appointed time had not come. The interval before it comes may be of the shortest, but the 'not yet' lasts till the 'now' comes, and then the obedience must be instant and complete. It is well known that this verse furnished Porphyry, the assailant of Christianity in the third century, with one of his arguments. In his Greek text of the Gospel the reading was, 'I go not up unto' (the word 'yet' being absent), and upon this Porphyry founded an accusation of fickleness and change of purpose.

Ver. 9. **And when he had said these things unto them he abode still in Galilee.** How long, we are not informed. As, however, it would seem that His brothers were on the point of setting out for Jerusalem, to be present at the beginning of the festival, and as He Himself was teaching in the temple when the sacred week had half expired (ver. 14), the interval spent in Galilee can hardly have been more than two or three days.

Ver. 10. **And when his brethren had gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not manifestly but as in secret.** We must not sever 'manifestly' from 'manifest thyself,' in ver. 4. Had Jesus joined any festal band, it would have been impossible

11 were in secret. The Jews therefore sought him, at
12 the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was
much murmuring among the multitudes concerning
him: some said, He is a good man: others said,
13 Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray. How-

(without an express miracle) to restrain the impetuous zeal of Galilean pilgrims, of whom very many had witnessed His 'signs' and listened to His words. To have gone up publicly would have been to 'manifest Himself to the world.' At the next great feast, the Passover of the following year, He did enter the holy city in triumph, thus proclaimed King of Israel by the rejoicing multitudes. For this, however, the time was not yet come. It is very probable that this journey must be identified with that related in Luke 9: 51 sqq. The privacy here spoken of has been thought inconsistent with Luke's statement that Jesus at that time traveled through Samaria with His disciples, 'sending messengers before him' (Luke 9: 52). But the divergence is only apparent. Jesus went up 'in secret,' in that He avoided the train of Galilean pilgrims, who may have reached Jerusalem before He set out from Galilee; besides, it is probable that the route through Samaria, though not altogether avoided by the festal companies (as we know from Josephus), would be more rarely taken. The sending of messengers implies no publicity; for such a company as this, composed of Jesus and His disciples, such a precaution might well be essential.

Ver. 11. **The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?** Their expectation that He would be present at this festival may have rested on no other ground than the national usage, to which Jesus had occasionally conformed even during His public ministry. Possibly His words (ver 8) 'I go not up *yet*' may have become known to the Galilean multitude, and hence to the Jews. Verses 1 and 13 seem to leave very little doubt that the 'seeking' was of a hostile character. By 'the Jews,' the Evangelist still means the ruling class, those whom worldliness and self-seeking had long since turned into the declared enemies of Jesus.

Ver. 12. **And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him. Some said, He is a good man: but others said, Nay, but He leadeth astray the multitude.** From the 'Jews' the Evangelist turns to the 'multitudes.' Amongst these is eager discussion concerning Jesus; the speculation, the hesitation, the inquiry, were general, but all outward expression was suppressed. The use of the plural 'multitudes' seems to point to crowds rather than individuals as the disputants. The word 'multitude,' however, at the close of the verse is not without a contemptuous force, —it is the common crowd that He leads astray: possibly the multitudes of Jerusalem may be the speakers.

Ver. 13. **Howbeit no man spake boldly concerning him,** beit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

## CHAPTER 7: 14–52.

### *Discourses of Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus
15 went up into the temple, and taught. The Jews

**because of the fear of the Jews.** Both sides, through their fear of the Jews, shrank from speaking out their thoughts. So complete was the ascendancy of these rulers over the people that no one ventured on any open discussion of the claims of Jesus. There was no doubt a belief that 'the Jews' were hostile to Him, but no public condemnation had been pronounced,—possibly no decision had been arrived at: till the leaders spoke out the people could only mutter their opinions.—Thus, then, the picture of what Jerusalem was at this moment is completed. Met together at the feast are Galileans, already half believers in Jesus, ready to be roused into enthusiastic activity by a display of His power; hostile Jews, the ecclesiastical authorities and those who shared their spirit, determined to crush out all inquiry as to His claim; and multitudes discussing these in secret, and revealing the utmost discordance of opinion. Everywhere we see movement, uncertainty, hope, or fear.

### *Discourses of Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles*, vers. 14–52.

CONTENTS.—In this section Jesus appears at the Feast, to which He went up when His Father's, and therefore His own, hour was come. The opportunity afforded by it of teaching is embraced, and we are presented with the teaching and its effect. In the successive discourses recorded, the same general line of thought is to be traced as in chaps. 5 and 6. But a particular direction is given them by the circumstances amidst which they are spoken. Jesus comes again before us as the Fulfiller of the law, of the last and greatest of the annual feasts of Israel—that feast which, in the language of the prophets, shadowed forth the gift of the Spirit and the highest glory of Messianic times. The effect is, as usual, two fold: some are attracted, others are repelled. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 14–24; (2) vers. 25–31; (3) vers. 32–36; (4) vers. 37–39; (5) vers. 40–44; (6) vers. 45–52.

Ver. 14. **And when it was already the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple-courts, and taught.** It is evident that the Evangelist means to impress us with the suddenness of this appearance of Jesus in the temple-courts. The Lord suddenly comes to His temple, and, at this feast of peculiar joy and hope, He brings with Him a special message and promise of the new covenant (ver. 38; Mal. 3: 1). His teaching during the latter half of the sacred week is to prepare for His words on the last day of the feast.

Ver. 15. **The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?** The

therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man
16 letters, having never learned? Jesus therefore an-
swered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but
17 his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will,
he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God,

marvelling on the part of the 'Jews' (see note on chap. 5: 20) is not an astonishment that compels further inquiry and leads towards belief. They are baffled, and forced to acknowledge against themselves what they would fain have denied. It was only after a long series of years spent in study that the Jewish scholar was permitted to become a teacher, and was solemnly ordained a member of the community of doctors of the law. Jesus, it was known, had not been taught in the rabbinical schools, nevertheless He was proving Himself, in such a manner that His enemies could not gainsay the fact, a skilled and powerful teacher. Jewish learning dealt chiefly with the letter of the written Word (especially the Law), and with the body of unwritten tradition. The words which crown our Lord's teaching at this feast enter into the very heart and express the inmost spirit of the whole Old Testament revelation (vers. 38, 39).

Ver. 16. **Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.** It was the practice of Jewish Rabbis to proclaim from whom they 'received' their teaching, and to quote the sayings of the wise men who preceded them. What they proclaimed of themselves, the teaching of Jesus proclaims of itself to all worthy listeners. His teaching, though He had never 'learned' it in the sense in which they use the term, is yet not His own; neither in its substance nor in its authority must they count it His. As His works were those which the Father gave Him to accomplish (chap. 5: 36), so His words were the expression of the truth which He has heard from God (8: 40), and the Father hath given Him commandment what He shall say (12: 49). Hence His words are God's words, and the teaching comes with the authority of God. Such teaching is self-evidential, where man really wishes to hear the voice of God; for—

Ver. 17. **If any one will to do his will, he will perceive of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.** Many a time did the Jews refuse to recognize the teaching of Jesus unless He could prove by a miracle that God was working with Him. Here He tells them that, had they the will to do God's will, they would need no miracle in evidence that in His teaching they heard the words of God: as the child at once recognizes his father's voice, so would they, if living in harmony with God's will and purpose, recognize in His voice the voice of God. Such recognition of the words of Jesus is the test, therefore, of a will bent on doing the will of God, and every such effort of will is consciously strengthened by His words; while, on the other hand, the heart which seeks

18 or *whether* I speak from myself. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is

its own glory, and not the glory of God, is repelled by them (chap. 5: 44). No words can more clearly show that the very end of the teaching of Jesus, as set forth in this Gospel, is not empty speculation, but practical righteousness. It may be asked, Is our Lord merely stating a truth ('he *will* perceive'), or is He also giving a promise ('he *shall* perceive—shall come to know')? Both thoughts are implied. Jesus does not say, that the clear conception comes at once—but come it will, come it shall. The last words must be carefully distinguished from those of chap. 5: 31, etc., 'bearing witness concerning Myself.' Here the word used refers to the origin, the source, of the speaking; and the meaning exactly agrees with chap. 5: 30—there 'doing,' here 'speaking,' from or of Himself. The words of ver. 17 are especially remarkable when we call to mind that they were addressed to persons all whose thoughts of revelation as a thing demonstrated to man were connected with tokens of the Divine presence appealing to the senses. What a new world did it open up to tell *them* that perception of the Divine origin of any teaching depends upon our seeing that it strengthens and perfects that moral nature which is within us the counterpart of the Divine nature!

Ver. 18. **He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory.** If a man speaks from himself, giving out all that he says as coming from himself, it is clear that he is seeking the glory of no one but himself. If one who so acts is a messenger from another (and here the thought in the later words, 'him that sent him,' seems intended to apply to the whole verse), it is plain that his attitude is altogether false: he represents as 'from himself' that which really is 'from him that sent him.'—**But he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.** From the maxim contained in the first clause of this verse it follows at once that whoever is not seeking his own glory does not speak from himself. But every word of Jesus shows that He seeks His Father's glory: hence it cannot be that He is speaking from Himself.—But as a *messenger* speaking from himself and aiming at his own glory is false to his position and work, so he that seeks the glory of the sender only is true to them, and there is no unrighteousness in him; his work and duty as messenger are fully accomplished. These last words, like the first clause of the verse, are perfectly general, though absolutely realized in Christ alone. By Him the condition is completely fulfilled; of Him the freedom from unrighteousness is absolutely true. This verse connects itself with what precedes and with what follows: (1) A will to do God's will will lead to right judgment respecting Christ (ver. 17), because he who has such a will can discern the complete submission of Jesus to the will of God, His complete freedom from self-seeking (ver. 18); (2) Is

19 true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not
Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you doeth
20 the law. Why seek ye to kill me? The multitude

it thus proved to every one who is seeking to do God's will that Jesus is the real messenger of God, accurately teaching His will, then the accusation which is in the minds of His enemies (vers. 21, 22), that He has contradicted God's will in the matter of the Sabbath (chap. 5: 18), must fall to the ground of itself.

Ver. 19. **Did not Moses give you the law, and no one of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?** There are two ways in which this verse may be taken, and between them it is not easy to decide. They turn on the interpretation of 'no one of you doeth the law;' for this may find its explanation either in the words that immediately follow or in vers. 21–25. It may be best to give the connection of thought according to each of these views. In both cases the 'law' chiefly denotes the Ten Commandments. (1) The accusation of the Jews against Jesus, of having trangressed God's will, must fall to the ground (ver. 18), but not so His accusation against them. Moses, whom all accepted as God's true messenger, gave them the law, which therefore expressed God's will, and yet every one of them was breaking the law, for they were seeking to kill Jesus. They were therefore self-convicted by their own works of opposing the revealed will of God; no wonder therefore that they had rejected Jesus. In favor of this explanation we may say that the words are (vers. 15, 16) addressed to 'the Jews,' whose murderous intention Jesus well knew not to have been inspired by true zeal for the law; that the words so understood aptly follow vers. 17, 18, and that we thus secure for the solemn expression 'doeth the law' a natural and worthy sense. (2) The other explanation connects this verse less strictly with ver. 18. In Jesus, as a true messenger, there is no unrighteousness. What they have called unrighteousness is altogether righteous; nay, it is what they themselves habitually do, and rightly do. Moses gave them the law, the whole law, and yet there is no one of them that keeps the whole law. Every one of them (as the example afterwards given proves) sets aside one of two conflicting laws, breaks one commandment when there is no other way of keeping a higher command inviolate; and this is all that Jesus did in the act for which they seek to kill Him. This second explanation agrees well with what follows; and, although at first sight it seems almost too mild to be spoken to 'the Jews,' it has really great sharpness. It must have at once penetrated their hearts, and thrown a light upon the guilt and folly of their conduct which they could only evade by again deliberately turning their eyes from the light. '*No one of you* doeth the law' is also a very heavy charge. On the whole, the second interpretation seems preferable to the first.

Ver. 20 **The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon; who seeketh to kill thee?** It is important to observe that this

answered, Thou hast a [1]devil: who seeketh to kill
21 thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one
22 work, and ye all [2]marvel. For this cause hath Moses*
given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but
of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a

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[1] Gr. *demon.*

[2] Or, *marvel because of this. Moses hath given you circumcision.*

* For "marvel. For this cause hath Moses," etc., read "marvel because thereof. Moses hath," etc., and omit the marg.—*Am. Com.*

answer is returned by the *multitude*, not by those to whom ver. 19 is addressed, and the multitude is apparently in entire ignorance of the designs of 'the Jews.' That the people should have thought possession by a demon the only possible explanation of the presence of such a thought in the mind of Jesus, places in boldest relief the guilt of 'the Jews.' To bring this out is probably the explanation of the insertion of a remark for which it is otherwise difficult to account.

Ver. 21. **Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel.** This answer seems to have been addressed to the multitude, or rather to the whole body of those present, including 'the Jews,' not to 'the Jews' alone (as is supposed by some who make ver. 20 a parenthesis): hence the calmness of the tone. 'One work,' viz., that recorded in chap. 5: 1–8—the miracle, with all its attendant circumstances. Many other miracles had Jesus wrought in Jerusalem (chap. 2: 25); but this one had caused all the amazement and repulsion of feeling of which He is here speaking.

Ver. 22. **For this cause hath Moses given you the circumcision** (**not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers**), **and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.** The very law was intended to teach them the fundamental principle upon which Jesus rested His defence, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, and to see that sometimes an ordinance is most honored when its letter is broken. 'For this cause'—to teach this lesson—Moses, who gave the Ten Commandments (ver. 19), one of which enjoined the Sabbath rest, took up into the law which he gave (see ver. 23, 'the law of Moses') the far earlier ordinance of circumcision, laying down or rather repeating the strict rule that the rite must be performed on the eighth day (Lev. 12: 3). When this eighth day fell on the Sabbath, the Jews, however inconsistent the rite might seem with the rigid Sabbath rest, yet, with a true instinct, never hesitated to circumcise a child. They felt that to receive the sign of God's covenant, the token of consecration and of the removal of uncleanness (and—may we add?—the token of the promise which was before and above the law, Gal. 3: 17), could never be really inconsistent with any command of God. In acting as they did, therefore, they proved that in this matter the lesson which the lawgiver designed to teach had been truly learned by them; yet it was a lesson essentially the same as that which the

23 man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the sab-
bath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are
ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit
24 whole* on the sabbath? Judge not according to ap-
pearance, but judge righteous judgement.
25 Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not
26 this he whom they seek to kill? And lo, he speak-
eth openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it

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* "a man every whit whole" add margin. Gr. *a whole man sound.—Am. Com.*

healing by Jesus on the Sabbath day had taught. This passage is of great interest as showing that in many respects the law, even whilst seeming to deal in positive precepts only, was intended to become, and in some measure actually was, a discipline, preparing for the 'dispensation of the Spirit.'

Ver. 23. **If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath day, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?** Their reverence for the law and their determination that it should not be broken led them to break the letter of the Fourth Commandment, or rather to do that which they would otherwise have thought inconsistent with its precept. How then can they be indignant at Jesus for the deed which He had done on the sabbath? He had performed a far more healing work than circumcision. He had given not merely a token of the removal of uncleanness, but complete freedom from the blight and woe which sin had brought (see chap. 5: 14) on the 'whole man.' It may be thought that in this last expression our Lord refers only to the cure of a disease by which the entire body had been prostrated; but the verse just quoted (chap. 5: 14) and the recollection of the figurative and spiritual application of the rite of circumcision with which the prophets had made the Jews familiar, warn us against limiting the miracle at the pool of Bethesda to the restoration of physical health.

Ver. 24. **Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.** Righteously had they judged in regard to themselves. So let them judge His work, and they will see that, where they had suspected only the presence of iniquity, there was the highest righteousness,

Ver. 25. **Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?** The speakers are a different class from those hitherto introduced,—'they of Jerusalem:' these seem to have more knowledge of the designs of 'the Jews' than was possessed by 'the multitude' (ver. 20).

Ver. 26. **And, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers know that this is the Christ?** No opinion as to these designs is expressed; there is

be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?
27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when
the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.
28 Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and
saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am;
and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me
29 is true, whom ye know not. I know him; because

neither sympathy nor blame; there is only bewilderment, occasioned by the inconsistency between the supposed wishes of the rulers and the boldness and freedom with which Jesus is allowed to speak. Can it be that there is some secret reason for this,—that the rulers have really made a discovery, which they will not allow—, that this is the Christ? The question is no sooner asked than it is answered by themselves:—

Ver. 27. **Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one perceiveth whence he is.** In ver. 42 we read of the expectation that the Christ would come from Bethlehem (see also Matt. 2: 5). But there is no inconsistency between this verse and that, for it seems to have been the belief of the Jews, that the Redeemer would indeed first appear in Bethlehem, but would then be snatched away and hidden, and finally would afterwards suddenly manifest Himself,—from what place and at what time no one could tell. So Jesus warns His disciples that the cry will be heard, 'Lo, here is the Christ; or, Lo, he is there.' (Mark 13: 21).

Vers. 28, 29. **Jesus therefore cried in the temple-courts teaching and saying.** Knowing that such words were in the mouths of the people of Jerusalem, Jesus cried aloud in the hearing of all. The word 'teaching' may seem unnecessary: it appears to be added in order to link what is here said to the teaching of vers. 14 and 16: what He says is no chance utterance, but forms part of the teaching designed for this festival.—**Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.** Jesus allows that they had a certain knowledge of Him, but He does this for the purpose of showing immediately thereafter that it was altogether inadequate and at fault. It was indeed important in one respect, for it involved the acknowledgment of His true humanity; but, denying all else, refusing to recognise Him in His higher aspect, scouting His claims to be the Sent of God, the expression of the eternal Father, it was really no more than an outward and carnal knowledge of Him. There seems to be a distinction between 'whence I am' and 'whence I come' (8: 14). The latter includes more directly the idea of the Divine *mission* of Jesus.—**And I have not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.** Words containing that true knowledge of Jesus which these men 'of Jerusalem' had not. It consists in recognising

30 I am from him, and he sent me. They sought therefore to take him: and no man laid his hand on him,
31 because his hour was not yet come. But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs
32 than those which this man hath done? The Phari-

in Him the 'Sent' of Him who is 'true,' not merely veracious or faithful, but *real*, who is the ground and essence of all reality, the only living and true God. In this respect those to whom Jesus was now speaking did not know Him; they beheld the outward man; they did not behold the manifestation of the eternal God. This ignorance, too, arose from the fact that they did not know God Himself. They thought that they knew Him; but they did not, for they had not penetrated to the right conception of His spiritual, righteous nature,—a nature corresponding only to eternal realities, to what is 'true.' Not knowing God, how could they know Jesus who 'manifested' the true God, who was 'from' the true God, and whom the true God 'sent'? Had they known the One they would have recognised the Other (chap. 5: 37; 8: 19). The words of vers. 28, 29 are thus words of sharp reproof.

Ver. 30. **They sought therefore to seize him.** Jesus had not mentioned the name of God, but those with whom He spoke (familiar with modes of speech in which the Divine Name was left unspoken and replaced by a pronoun, as here, or by some attribute) did not miss His meaning. He had denied to them the knowledge of God, and at the same time had claimed for Himself the closest fellowship with Him, to be indeed the very expression of what He was.—**And no man laid his hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.** Their zeal and enmity were at once aroused; the 'men of Jerusalem' followed in the steps of 'the Jews' (ver. 1). Yet they could not touch Him, for it was not yet God's time.

Ver. 31. **But of the multitude many believed in him, and said, When the Christ cometh, will he do more signs than these which this man hath done?** The last verse showed how the hostility to Jesus was growing; this verse presents the brightest side. The division of the people goes on continually increasing: they who are of the light are attracted towards Jesus, they who are of darkness are repelled. The faith of these believers is real ('they believed *in Him*') though not so firm and sure as that which rests less on 'signs' than on His own word.

Ver. 32. **The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize him.** To the various parties already mentioned in this chapter, the Jews (vers. 11, 13, 15), the multitudes (ver. 12), or the multitude (vers. 20, 31), and them of Jerusalem (ver. 25), are here added the Pharisees and also the chief priests-sees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him; and the chief priests and the Phar-

now mentioned for the first time in this Gospel. In three earlier passages (chap. 1: 24; 3: 1; 4: 1) John has spoken of the Pharisees, and in the last of these only (chap. 4: 1) has there been any intimation of either secret or open hostility on the part of this sect toward our Lord. It is otherwise with the other Gospels. In the course of that Galilean ministry which is not distinctly recorded by John the Pharisees occupy a very distinct position as foes of Jesus. To the period between John's last mention of the Pharisees and the present verse belong His controversies with them respecting fasting, His association with sinners (Matt. 9; Mark 2; Luke 5—compare Luke 7: 49), the sabbath (Matt. 12; Mark 2; Luke 6), the tradition of the elders (Matt. 15; Mark 7), and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 5; Matt. 9; Mark 2.—compare Luke 7: 39). The Pharisees have attempted to persuade the multitude that He wrought His miracles through the prince of the devils (Matt. 9; Matt. 12; Mark 3). He has refused their request that they might see a sign from heaven (Matt. 16; Mark 8), and has warned the disciples against their teaching (Matt. 16; Mark 8) and their 'righteousness' (Matt. 5: 20). In Matt. 12: 14 we read that the Pharisees (Mark 3: 6, the Pharisees and the Herodians) held a consultation how they might destroy Him. Up to this point, however, in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel it would seem most probable that, *as a body*, they had not assumed a position of distinct hostility to our Lord. It was not in Galilee, of which the earlier Gospels speak, but in Jerusalem, where were their chief members and influence, that an organized opposition could best be formed by them; and in many passages at all events we gather that those of their number who assailed Jesus were no more than emissaries sent down from the capital by the rulers. Things now take a different turn in John's Gospel. The Pharisees come more prominently forward, act more as a party than as individuals, and begin to constitute a distinctly hostile *power* to Jesus. The events which had passed in Galilee, though not noted by John, may explain the change.—The chief priests are, as has been said, first mentioned here by John. In the other Gospels also they are scarcely referred to up to this period of the history, for Matt. 16: 21 (Mark 8: 31; Luke 9: 22) is a prophecy, and the only remaining passage in the first three Gospels is Matt. 2: 4, where it is said that Herod convened 'all the high priests and scribes of the people.' It has been supposed that this expression denotes the Sanhedrin, but the great court of the nation did not include 'all the scribes.' With much more certainty may the words of Matt. 16: 21, 'the elders and the high priests and the scribes,' be taken as an enumeration of the three elements of the supreme council. What is the exact meaning of chief priests or high priests, thus spoken of in the plural, it is perhaps impossible to say. The usual view is that the chiefs of the twenty-four classes of priests are

33 isees sent officers to take him. Jesus therefore said,
Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him
34 that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find

intended; but there seems little or no evidence in support of this explanation. The only point on which we can speak with certainty is that the expression must include all living who had been high priests. In those unsettled times the tenure of office was occasionally very short, and always precarious. Annas the father-in-law of Caiaphas (chap. 18: 13) was deposed by the Roman Procurator about fourteen years before the time of which we now speak: within three or four years of his deposition as many as four were appointed to the high-priesthood, the last of whom, Caiaphas, retained office until A. D. 36. At this time, therefore, besides the actual high priest, three or four may have been living who had once borne this name, and their former dignity would give them weight in a council which consisted of Jews alone. Whether prominent members of families to which present or former high priests belonged (compare Acts 4: 6) were also included under this name, or whether it denoted other priests who stood high in influence as members of the Sanhedrin, is very doubtful.—The multitude talked among themselves in the temple of the grounds of the faith in Jesus which was growing in their hearts. Their talk is secret ('murmuring'), but not so secret that the Pharisees did not overhear their words. Convinced that the teaching which so powerfully impresses the people must be heard no longer, they seek therefore the aid of the chief priests, whose attendants are immediately despatched with orders to seize Jesus.

Ver. 33. **Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me.** In the action now taken by His foes Jesus sees a token of the rapidity with which His hour is approaching. These words, which (ver. 35) were spoken in the presence of 'the Jews,' declare His perfect knowledge of their designs. But they are also words of judgment, taking from His enemies their last hope.

Ver. 34. **Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me.** The frequent occurrence of the 'seeking' in this chapter suggests as the first meaning of these words, Ye will seek to lay hands on me, but shall not find me. That was the only 'seeking' of which the Jews wished to think. But the eye of Jesus rested on the calamities from which at a future time they would seek to be delivered by the Christ, but would seek in vain. His enemies have refused to recognise in His words the teaching of 'Him that sent' Him (ver. 16): when He has returned to His Father their eyes will be opened to their madness and folly.—**And where I am, ye cannot come.** 'Where I am,' He says, 'where I shall be:' here, as elsewhere, the simple expression of continuous existence is most befitting for Him who is one with the Father. Into that Fellowship, that Presence, no enemies of the Son shall come.

35 me: and where I am, ye cannot come. The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the Dispersion [1]among the Greeks, and teach the

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[1] Gr. *of.*

Ver. 35. **The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither is this man about to go, that we shall not find him?** Our Lord's words were mysterious, but yet were so closely linked with His earlier teaching, as related in this very chapter, that their general meaning would be clear to every patient listener. Vers. 16 and 17 were alone sufficient to show that 'to Him that sent me' could only mean 'to God.' But this impression 'the Jews' must at all hazards avert: chap. 8: 22 shows how eagerly they sought to blunt the edge of such words as Jesus has now spoken. There they suggest that only by seeking death can He escape their search; here, that it is on exile amongst Gentiles that He has now resolved. His teaching has seemed to them a complete reversal of Jewish modes of thought. No learning of the schools prepared Him for His self-chosen office (ver. 15); He accuses all Israel of having broken the law of Moses (ver. 19); He sets at naught the most rigid rules of Sabbath observance: all things show that He has no sympathy with, no tolerance for, the most firmly established laws and usages of the Jewish people. And now He is going, not to return. Where?—**Is he about to go to the Dispersion of the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?** Can it be that He has cast off Jews altogether and is going to Gentiles? This is said in bitter scorn; but it may have been suggested by words of Jesus not expressly recorded. In answering His brethren just before the feast (ver. 7), He had spoken of 'the world;' before the end of the same feast (8: 12), He says: 'I am the light of the world.' Even if we were not to accept the Jewish tradition, which records that in the offering of the seventy bullocks at the Feast of Tabernacles there was distinct reference to the ('seventy') nations of the Gentile world—a tradition deeply interesting and probably true—we can have no difficulty in supposing that in His teaching during the festival Jesus had repeatedly used words regarding 'the world' which enemies might readily pervert. His interest, they say in effect, is not with Jews, but with the 'world:' is he leaving us? —then surely He is going to the world, to the heathen whom He loves. —The great difficulty of this verse is the use of such a phrase as 'the Dispersion of the Greeks.' An explanation is furnished by the thought already suggested—that the Jews, with irony and scorn, would show forth Jesus as reversing all their cherished instincts, beliefs and usages. If a true Israelite must depart from the Holy Land, he resorts to the Dispersion of his brethren. Not so with this man: He too is departing from us; but it is a Dispersion of Gentiles. not of Israelites, that He will seek; it is Gentiles whom He will teach. As

36 Greeks? What is this word which he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come.

37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let

in the case of Caiaphas (chap. 11: 50, 51), so here; words spoken in hate and scorn are an unconscious prophecy. He will teach and gather together the children of God that are scattered abroad—this is the very purpose of His coming. The book which is the companion to this Gospel, the Apocalypse, contains many examples of this new and (so to speak) converse application of familiar words. Thus in Rev. 1: 7 we find mankind designated as 'tribes of the earth.' It is right to say, that the explanation of 'Dispersion of the Greeks' which we have given is not that generally received. The common view is that the Jews represent Jesus as going to 'the Dispersion amongst the Gentiles,' and, from this as a point of departure (like the apostles of Jesus afterwards), becoming a teacher of the Gentiles. But (1) This meaning can hardly be obtained without straining the original words. (2) As probably many of 'the multitude' themselves belonged to 'the Dispersion,' the added words 'of the Greeks' would be useless if intended as explanatory, insulting if used for depreciation. (3) The first clause becomes almost superfluous; why should they not say at once, Is He about to go amongst the Greeks? (4) The introduction of a 'point of departure' or connecting link is most unsuitable to the present state of feeling of cur Lord's enemies, 'the Jews.'

Ver. 36. **What is this word which he spake, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come?** This verse contains little more than a repetition of the Saviour's former statement, but is useful in reminding us that the Jews, whose bitter words we have just been considering, were themselves perplexed by what they heard. We must not suppose that they pondered and *then* rejected the teaching of Jesus; their enmity rendered impossible that patient thought which would have found the key to His mysterious language; they understood enough to have been attracted, had they only been willing listeners, by the light and the life of His words. Their ignorance resulted from the absence of the will to learn and to do God's will (ver. 17).

Ver. 37. **And in the last day, the great day, of the feast.** The Feast of Tabernacles properly so called continued seven days. During (a part of) each day all the men of Israel dwelt in booths made with boughs of palm, willow, pine and other trees. Day by day burnt-offerings and other sacrifices were presented in unusual profusion. Every morning, whilst the Israelites assembled in the temple-courts, one of the priests brought water drawn in a golden urn from the pool of Siloam, and amidst the sounding of trumpets and other demonstrations of joy poured the water upon the altar. This rite is

38 him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on

not mentioned in the Old Testament; but, as a commemoration of the miraculous supply of water in the wilderness, it was altogether in harmony with the general spirit of the festival. The chanting of the great Hallel (Ps. 113–118) celebrated the past; but (as we learn from the Talmud) the Jews also connected with the ceremony the words of Isaiah (12: 3), 'Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,' and saw in it a type of the effusion of the Holy Spirit. On the evening of the first and (probably) of each following day the 'rejoicing of the drawing of the water' was celebrated in the court of the women, with dancing, singing, and music; and lamps, raised on four immense candelabra placed in the middle of the same court illumined both the temple and the city. On the seventh day the ordinary ceremonies of the feast came to an end. There was added, however, an eighth day (Num. 29: 35), a day of holy convocation, on which no work might be done. This day did not strictly belong to the feast, but was 'a feast by itself,' perhaps as closing (not only the Feast of Tabernacles, but also) the whole series of festivals for the year; naturally, however, it became attached to the Feast of Tabernacles in ordinary speech. Whether the 'great day' so emphatically mentioned here was this eighth day or the seventh day of the feast is a point which has been much discussed, and on which we cannot arrive at certainty. On the whole it is most probable that the eighth day is referred to, the day of holy rest, in which the feasts seemed to reach their culmination, and which retained the sacred associations of the festival just past, though the marks of special rejoicing had come to an end. This last day He, to whom all the festivals of Israel pointed, chose for the proclamation, which showed the joy and hope of the Feast of Tabernacles fulfilled in Himself.—**Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink.** The words 'stood and cried' bring into relief the solemn earnestness of this declaration, which completed and perfected the teaching of Jesus at this feast. The occasion was given (if we are right in regarding the eighth as 'the great day'), not by the ceremony observed, but by the blank left through the cessation of the familiar custom. The water had been poured upon the altar for seven days, reminding of past miracles of God's mercy and promises of yet richer grace; hopes had been raised, but not yet satisfied. When the ceremonies had reached their close, Jesus 'stood and cried' to the multitudes that what they had hitherto looked for in vain they shall receive in Him. As in the synagogue of Nazareth He read from the book of Isaiah, and declared that the Scripture was that day fulfilled in their ears; so here He takes up familiar words of the same prophet (Isa. 55: 1), calling every one that thirsteth to come unto Him.

Ver. 38. **He that believeth in me, as the scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** The words of ver. 37 remind us of the people who drank of the spiritual rock

me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly* shall
39 flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the
Spirit, which they that believed on him were to re-

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* For "out of his belly" read "from within him" (with marg. Gr. *out of his belly*) —*Am. Com.*

that followed them (1 Cor. 10: 4), the miracle commemorated in the pouring of the water from Siloam; the last words ('shall flow rivers') resemble more the promise of Isa. 12: 3, amplified in all its parts. There is nothing incongruous in this union of promises; Isa. 44: 3 includes both: 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' This is not the first time that we have found 'coming to Jesus' and 'believing in Him' thus brought together; see the note on chap. 6: 35. Out of the heart of him that thus cometh, thus believeth in Jesus, shall flow rivers of living water. Not only shall he receive what his thirst demands and be satisfied, but he himself shall become the source of a stream—nay, rivers—of living waters. The water shall bring life to him; the water flowing out of his heart shall bring life wherever it comes. All this is the gift of Jesus, who is set forth as the One Source of the water of Life. But what is meant by 'as the Scripture said?' Many passages of the Old Testament contain similar imagery; but one only appears really to accord with the figure of this verse, viz. the vision of Ezek. 47. The prophet saw a stream of living water issuing from the temple, and expanding into a river whose waters brought life wherever they flowed. The temple prefigured Christ (chap. 2: 21); the water of life is the gift of the Holy Spirit, pre-eminently Christ's gift (chap. 4: 14). The Lord Himself received into the believer's heart brings the gift of the living water; and from Him, thus abiding in the heart, flows the river of the water of life.

Ver. 39. **And this spake he concerning the Spirit, which they that believed in him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet (given); because that Jesus was not yet glorified.** The word is a promise still, speaking of a future gift ('were to receive'). The verse before us is one which it is impossible to express in English without a paraphrase. In the first clause we find 'the Spirit;' but in the second the article is absent, and the words literally mean 'for spirit was not yet'—the word 'spirit' meaning, not the Holy Spirit as a Person, but a bestowal or reception of His influence and power. Only when Jesus was glorified, that is, only when He had died, had risen, had ascended on high, had been invested with the glory which was His own at the right hand of the Father, would man receive that spiritual power which is the condition of all spiritual life. When Jesus Himself, the God-man, is perfected, then, and not till then, does He receive power to bestow the Holy Spirit on mankind. This mysterious subject mainly belongs, however, to later chapters of this Gospel (see especially chap. 16: 7).—Here our

ceive; [1] for the Spirit was not yet *given;* because
40 Jesus was not yet glorified. *Some* of the multitude
therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is
41 of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the
Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come
42 out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that the
Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethle-
43 hem, the village where David was? So there arose a
44 division in the multitude because of him. And some
of them would have taken him; but no man laid
hands on him.

45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests
and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *for the Holy Spirit was not yet given.*

Lord's revelation of Himself as the fulfilment of the Old Testament culminates. The Feast of Tabernacles was the last great feast of the year. It was also the feast which raised sacred rejoicing to its highest point; which shadowed forth the full bestowal of Messianic blessings (comp. Zech. 14: 16); and which spoke most of the Holy Spirit, the supreme gift of Jesus to His people. With its fulfilment all the brightest anticipations of ancient prophecy are realized. The effect of this revelation of Jesus by Himself is now traced.

Ver. 40. **Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, Of a truth this is the prophet.** On 'the prophet,' and the distinction between this appellation and 'the Christ,' see the note on chap. 1: 21.

Vers. 41, 42. **Others said, This is the Christ. Some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?** See Matt. 2: 6. This explanation of the prophecy of Micah (chap. 5: 2) is found in the Targum, and seems to have been commonly received by the Jews.

Vers. 43, 44. **There arose therefore a division among the multitude because of him. And some of them would have seized him; but no man laid hands on him.** Comp. ver. 30. Here, as there, the result of the division of opinion is a more eager attempt to apprehend Him about whom the dispute has arisen. The last words of ver. 30 may be again supplied in thought: 'his hour was not yet come.'

Ver. 45. **The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?** The sending of the officers is mentioned in ver. 32.

46 ye not bring him? The officers answered, Never
47 man so spake. The Pharisees therefore answered
48 them, Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the
49 rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But
this multitude which knoweth not the law are ac-
50 cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came
51 to him before, being one of them), Doth our law
judge a man, except it first hear from himself and

From ver. 37 we may gather that they had been lingering near Him for a day or more: His last words seem to have deprived them of all power to lay hands on Him. There is a minute difference between the senders as described in ver 32 ('the chief priests and the Pharisees') and here, where the second article is dropped. The slight change serves to emphasize the union of the two elements (so to speak) into one for the purpose in hand, but is not sufficient to suggest that here, reference is made to the Sanhedrin as a body. It does not appear that there is formal action of the Sanhedrin earlier than the record in chap. 11: 47.

Ver. 46. **The officers answered, Never did a man so speak.** A new testimony to Jesus, borne by men who, awed by the majesty of His words, instead of attempting a deed of violence, declare to their very masters that He is more than man.

Vers. 47, 48, 49. **The Pharisees therefore answered them, Have ye also been led astray? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude which understandeth not the law are accursed.** In such a matter as the acceptance of any man as Messiah, the judgment of the rulers (members of the Sanhedrin) must surely be decisive; but what ruler or who of the Pharisees has sanctioned the claims of Jesus? The foolish multitude may have done so, in this showing an ignorance which, in the mind of the Pharisees, deserves and brings with it a curse.—Of such contemptuous treatment of the common people, as distinguished from 'the disciples of the wise,' many examples may be produced from the sayings of Jewish Rabbins.

Vers. 50, 51. **Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it have first heard from himself, and learned what he doeth?** Twice already in this section have we read of the restraint placed on the enemies of Jesus. Those amongst the multitude who were ill affected towards Him were kept back from doing Him harm (ver. 44); the officers likewise were restrained (ver. 46); now the Sanhedrists themselves are to be foiled, and this through one of themselves. Nicodemus (3: 1) has so far overcome his fear that he defends Jesus against the glaring injustice of his fellow-rulers, undeterred by the expression of their scorn just uttered. He appeals to the law, all

52 know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and [1]see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

## CHAPTER 8: 12-59.

### *Jesus the Son of the Father, the Giver of Sonship, and, therewith, of Light.*

12 Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall

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[1] Or, *see: for out of Galilee, &c.*

knowledge of which they have proudly arrogated to themselves, and shows that of this very law they are themselves transgressors.

Ver. 52. **They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.** No answer to the argument was possible: they can but turn on Nicodemus himself. They assume that no one but a Galilean can take the side of Jesus. The last words are difficult, because at least one of the ancient prophets (Jonah) was of Galilee. But the words do not seem to be intended to include all the past, so much as to express what Jews held to be, and to have long been, a stated rule of Divine Providence: in their scorn of Galilee, and their arrogant assumption of complete knowledge of 'the law,' they regard it as impossible that out of that land any prophet should arise; least of all can it be the birth-place of the Messiah.

For remarks on the following verses, extending from 7: 53 to 8: 11, see the close of this Commentary.

### *Jesus the Son of the Father, the Giver of Sonship and, therewith, of Light*, vers. 12-59.

CONTENTS. The feast of Tabernacles is closed, and with it the great illumination of the temple-courts, of which the Jews were wont to boast in lofty terms. Starting from this, and from the fact that He is the true light of the world, Jesus reveals more clearly than He has yet done what He Himself is, and by contrast what His opponents are. Everything that He utters assumes its sharpest, most peremptory, most decisive tone. The rage of His adversaries is roused to its highest intensity. The darkness becomes thickest, while the light shines in the midst of it with its greatest brightness. Nothing more can be done to change the darkness into light; henceforward the children of light can only be withdrawn from it. At the close of the chapter Jesus goes out of the temple, leaving the darkness to itself, but not overcome by it. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 12-20; (2) vers. 21-30; (3) vers. 31-50.

Ver. 12. **Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world.** The last thirteen verses (chap. 7: 48-52) have been occupied with an account of the impression made

not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of
13 life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou
bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true.

by our Lord's words of promise (chap. 7: 37, 38). This verse really follows chap. 7: 38, containing a second manifestation of Jesus, in a form and manner still connected with the feast which had just ended. As the pouring out of the water had furnished occasion for the promise of the living water, so the imagery of this verse was probably suggested by the illumination of the temple-courts on the evenings of the festival. This illumination proceeded from four great candelabra erected in the court of the women, and of its brilliancy the Rabbins speak in the highest strains. It formed indeed so marked a feature of the week's rejoicings, that no one can be surprised to find a reference to it in our Lord's words. Like the water poured on the altar, the light may well have had a twofold symbolism, commemorating the mighty guidance of Israel by the pillar of fire, and also prefiguring the light which was to spring up in the times of the Messiah (Isa. 9: 2; 42: 6; etc.). What the pillar of fire had been to Israel in the wilderness, that would Messiah be to His people in the latter days. —**He that followeth me shall in no wise walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.** The words 'he that followeth me' are in all probability closely connected with the figure of the first clause of the verse. Around is 'the darkness' of night:' only where the pillar of fire moves light shines on all that follow its course,—on all, not on Israel only, for Jesus is 'the light of the *world*.' The language of both promises is free from every limitation save that which is expressed in 'coming to' Him, 'believing' in Him (chap. 7: 37, 38), and 'following' Him. The special condition mentioned in this verse (when we pass from the associations of the original figure to the practical application of the words) brings out the idea of discipleship and imitation. This includes 'coming' and 'believing.' No true disciple shall walk in the darkness, but shall have as his own inward possession (comp. chap. 7: 38) the light of life,—the light which life gives. Living in Christ, he shall have the light of Christ (see chap. 1: 4). Darkness bears with it the ideas of ignorance, danger, and sin: light implies knowledge, guidance, safety, and holy purity (chap. 12: 35; 1 Thess. 5: 4; 1 John 1: 5.)

Ver. 13. **The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness concerning thyself; thy witness is not true.** We have here a reminiscence of Christ's own words (chap. 5: 31), of which His enemies now take hold, that they may turn them against Himself. Since the discourse of chap. 5, the Pharisees of Jerusalem have never possessed so favorable an opportunity of thus seeking to repel the claims which Jesus asserts. As used by our Lord (in chap. 5), the words signify that, if His testimony concerning Himself stood alone, not only would it (according to all laws of evidence) be invalid, but it would be untrue,—as the very thought of such un-

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know
15 not whence I came, or whither I go. Ye judge after the

supported witness would conflict with the fundamental truth of chap. 5: 19. Here the words, as applied by His foes, are intended to have the same meaning: His solitary testimony has no validity, and, by His own confession, is untrue.

Ver. 14. **Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness concerning myself, my witness is true: because I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.** A little later (ver. 17), Jesus gives an answer similar to the purport of His words in chap. 5. His Father beareth witness of Him, and His Father's testimony is ever present. But here He rebukes their judgment of Him. In a sense (ver. 17), their requirement of other testimony is valid; but first He must reject their application to Him of a principle of judgment which is valid in regard to men like themselves. Amongst men of like nature—those who are but men—such judgment is true: when applied to Jesus it fails. Men who know but in part may be self-deceivers, even if they are true men; hence their word needs support. He who knows with unerring certainty that He comes from the Father and is going to the Father may bear witness of Himself, and His testimony is valid and true. He who thus comes from God cannot but speak with a self-evidencing power,—self-evidencing to all who are willing to see and hear. This willingness the Pharisees had not, and hence He adds, 'Ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.' The change from 'I came' to 'I come' is remarkable, but is easily explained. The past fact ('I came') is not one which the Pharisees could know, except by inference: His present mission from the Father ('I come') should have been discerned by all who saw His works and heard His words; and every one who recognised that He cometh from the Father must understand His meaning when He says 'I go' to Him that sent me. On 'I come' comp. 7: 28.

Ver. 15. **Ye judge after the flesh.** They had judged Him by mere outward appearance, and according to their own merely human thoughts and wishes. Having formed for themselves without patient study of the Scriptures, and thus without the guidance of the Spirit of God, their conception of Messiah and of His kingdom, they rejected Jesus because He did not answer their expectation. But for this, the Divine witness in Him would have reached their hearts. **I judge no one.** They judged according to their own nature,—standing alone, without the guidance of the Father along with them in judging, and thus not judging 'righteous judgment' (7: 24). Jesus judgeth no man. The fifth chapter has prepared us for such words as these. Here, as there, they do not exclude all judgment, but all *sole* judg-

16 flesh; I judge no man. Yea, and if I judge, my
judgement is true; for I am not alone, but I and the
17 Father that sent me. Yea and in your law it is writ-
18 ten, that the witness of two men is true. I am he
that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that

ment (see ver. 16): it is not He that judgeth, but rather the Father who judgeth in Him. Chap. 5: 22 and this verse are not discordant: between the Father, the ultimate source of judgment, and those who are judged is the Son, to whom the Father hath given authority to do judgment, but who doeth nothing save in and with the Father. The 'I' is thus emphatic, equivalent to 'I by myself' or 'I without the Father.'

Ver. 16. **But even if I judge, my judgment is true: because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.** Because in no action is He alone, even if He judges His judgment is true; it is a *real* judgment, a judgment corresponding, not to outward appearance, but to the eternal reality of things, because according to the Father's will. The assertion of this verse, that the Father is ever with Him, corresponds to the words, 'I know whence I came,' in ver. 14: the link which binds together all these verses is His constant and perfect knowledge that the Father is with Him and in Him. In this lies the validity of His witness: in this is involved the condemnation of His foes.

Ver. 17. **But in your own law also it is written that the witness of two men is true.** In the very law which they magnified, on which they take their stand, as they accuse Him of breaking the law, and declare that all who follow him are ignorant of the law (chap. 7: 49, etc.), this principle is laid down (Deut. 17: 6; 19: 15). An emphasis is made to rest on 'men' to prepare for the next verse. The words 'your own law' at once magnify the law and are an *argumentum ad hominem.* His purpose is to show that the principle upon which He proceeded was founded in the law which they themselves so highly honored, and the rules of which they were not entitled to neglect.

Ver. 18. **I am he that beareth witness concerning myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness concerning me.** In all the Son's witness concerning Himself, it is the Father that beareth witness concerning Him. This is the teaching of chap. 5, and it is easy to see that the witness may with equal truth be spoken of as that of Two, or as that borne by One (the Father). In thus speaking to His enemies of a twofold witness, He may mean either (1) that they should themselves have discerned in Him, over and above that which in a human prophet they would have accepted as 'witness,' a higher presence which could only be Divine; or (2) that in the witness which He had borne they had dreamed of unsupported words only because they could not attain to that perfect knowledge which

19 sent me beareth witness of me. They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father: if ye
20 knew me, ye would know my Father also. These words spake he in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man took him: because his hour was not yet come.

21 He said therefore again unto them, I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither

He alone possessed. They heard and saw one witness only; to His consciousness there were two. The first of these two views is by much the more probable. Jesus appeals to two facts which they *ought* to have known, that He was the expression of the Father, and that what He was the Father was. These two were wholly separate and independent things, although the validity of each depended upon that consciousness of the Divine in them which they had silenced.

Ver. 19. **They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father?** If He is to add His witness to Thine, Let him appear and bear His testimony. The words are those of men who will not seek to enter into the meaning of the Speaker. As they judge men 'according to the flesh,' they will go no farther than the literal import of the words. But after what they have heard and seen in Jesus, such action cannot consist with sincerity; it is not only to enemies but to hypocrites that He speaks.—**Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father: If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.** They professed not to know who is His Father. In truth they were without any real knowledge, not of the Father only, but of Jesus Himself. Had they, through receiving and believing His words, attained such knowledge of Him, they would have attained in Him the revelation of the Father also.

Ver. 20. **These words spake he in the treasury, teaching in the temple-courts: and no man seized him, because his hour was not yet come.** Again His adversaries were overawed: though He was teaching within the precincts of the temple, in the very place of their power, no one laid hands on Him. The Treasury was in the court of the women, the very place in which the rejoicings we have described (see chap. 7: 37) took place.

Ver. 21. **He said therefore again unto them, I go, and ye shall seek me, and in your sin ye shall die: whither I go, ye cannot come.** The conflict of Jesus with His opponents has now passed into a higher stage. It is no longer with the Pharisees merely (ver. 13), but with the Jews (ver. 22). The witness, too, which Jesus now bears regarding Himself has reference to the last things, both for Himself and for them. It is vain however to inquire when the discourse was thus continued: the bond is one rather of thought than of date.

22 I go, ye cannot come. The Jews therefore said,
Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go, ye
23 cannot come? And he said unto them, Ye are from
beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I
24 am not of this world. I said therefore unto you,
that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe

The main object of these words is judgment: hence Jesus does not linger on the thought of His own departure, but on that of the fate awaiting them. The time will come when they will seek Him, but in vain. He is not speaking of the seeking of faith or of repentance, but (as before in chap. 7: 34) of the awakening (too late) to need and danger,—an awakening not accompanied by the forsaking of sin, for He adds, 'in your sin' (*i. e.* your state of sin, comp. ver. 24) 'ye shall die.'

Ver. 22. **The Jews therefore said, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go ye cannot come.** Before (chap. 7: 35) their answer had been, Will He go to Gentiles? The change here shows how much farther the conflict has advanced. Will He go to the realms of the dead, they ask,—to that darkest and most dreadful region reserved for those who take their own life, a region where true Israelites cannot come? Their ignorance of themselves is as profound as their ignorance of Jesus. Jesus had made His meaning plain (chap. 7: 33), but they wilfully blind themselves. Hence only one answer is possible now.

Vers. 23, 24. **And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye shall not believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins.** The second of these verses fixes the meaning of the first. The words, 'I said that ye shall die in your sins,' are so connected both with what precedes (by means of 'therefore') and with what follows (by means of 'for'), that the *ground* of this sentence of death is brought under our notice by each of these particles,—it is to be found in the unbelief of which the following clause speaks, and in the fact stated in the preceding verse. As then this ground of condemnation is distinctly *moral* (ver. 24), the expressions in ver. 23 must also have a moral and not a fatalistic meaning. The condemnation results from something in the men themselves, not from any original necessity; should they believe, no longer would Jesus say to them, Ye are from beneath. The origin of their spirit and action, dominated by unbelief, is to be sought, not above, but beneath,—not in heaven, but in earth: nay rather (for the thought distinctly expressed in ver. 44 is implicitly present here also), whereas He whom they are in thought consigning to the lowest depths of woe and punishment is of God, they are of the devil. His words grow more and more distinct in their awful import, and yet they are words of mercy:

25 that [1]I am *he*,* ye shall die in your sins. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? Jesus said unto

[1] Or, *I am*.

* "I am *he*" omit marg. [1] (and the corresponding portion of marg. [4]). So in 13: 19.—*Am. Com.*

for the meaning is not, Except ye are *now* believers, the sentence is passed,—but, Except ye shall believe (most literally 'shall have believed'): even now they may receive Him, and the sentence will have no existence for them.—But the most striking point in this verse is the mode in which our Lord expresses the object of belief,—'Except ye shall believe that *I am*.' Something apparently like this has occurred before in chap. 4: 26, but the two cases are really widely different. There the word 'Messiah' has just been spoken, and the answer, 'It is I,' is perfectly plain in its meaning. Here there is no such word in the context; and to assume an ellipsis, and *then supply the very word on which all the emphasis must rest*, is a dangerous step: to act thus is not to bring out the meaning of the passage, but to bring our own meaning into it. Besides, as we have already seen, our Lord is wont elsewhere to use the expression 'I am' in a very emphatic sense (see chap. 7: 34, etc.), with distinct reference to that continuous, unchanging existence which only He who is Divine can claim. The most remarkable example of these exalted words is found in the 58th verse of this chapter (comp. also ver. 28). Without forestalling this, however, we may safely say that it is of His Divine Being that Jesus here speaks. The thought of existence is clearly present in the verse. 'Ye shall die,' He says, 'unless ye shall have been brought to see in me—not what the impious words of ver. 22 imply, but—One who is,—who, belonging to the realms above, possesses life—who, being of God, has life as His own and as His own gift.' So understood, our Lord's words speak of belief, not directly in His Messiahship, but in that other nature of His, that Divine nature, on His possession of which He makes all His other claims to rest.

Ver. 25. **They said therefore unto him, Who art thou?** Had they been patient, willing listeners, they would have seen His meaning; but now He seems to them to have left out the one essential word, in thus saying: 'Except ye shall believe that I am.' What is that word? 'Who art thou?' The tone of the preceding words make it certain that the question is one of impatience and scorn, not of a spirit eager and ready to learn. This is a point of importance, as throwing light on our Lord's reply.—**Jesus said unto them, How is it that I even speak to you at all?** The true nature and meaning of this reply are points on which the greatest difference of opinion has existed, and still exists. The question is one of translation, not interpretation merely; and a discussion on a matter of Greek philology would be out of place here. The first words of the sentence are 'The beginning;' and many have endeavored to retain these words in translation, but in very different ways. Some

them, [1] Even that which I have also spoken unto you
26 from the beginning.* I have many things to speak
and to judge concerning you: howbeit he that sent
me is true; and the things which I heard from him,

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[1] Or, How is it *that I even speak to you at all?*

* Substitute for the present marg. [2] Or, *Altogether that which I also speak unto you.—Am. Com.*

have taken 'The beginning' as a name applied by our Lord to Himself; others understand the words adverbially, as meaning 'in the beginning,' 'from the very first,' 'before all things. But none of these explanations can be obtained without doing violence to the Greek; and we are therefore bound to consider them all untenable. One line of translation only seems to be allowed by the Greek—that which takes the words as a question (or exclamation), and gives to the first words ('the beginning') a meaning which in such sentences they often bear, viz. 'at all' (as 'Does he act at all?' is equivalent to 'Does he even make a beginning of action?'). This is the interpretation which the early Greek writers, Cyril of Alexandria and Chrysostom gave to the words; and we cannot but lay stress on the fact that such men, who habitually spoke Greek, seem not to have thought of any other meaning. Whether the sentence is an exclamation or a question, the general sense is the same, viz., *Why am I even speaking to you at all?* Much has He to say *concerning them* (ver. 26) and to judge; but why does He any longer *speak to* men who will not understand His word? The words remind us of Matt. 17: 17: 'O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?' And yet those words were said to slow-minded Galilæans, not to the hostile 'Jews.'

Ver. 26. **I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you.** It is unavailing to speak to them, for they will not believe. Many things has He to speak concerning them, and to judge also.—**Nevertheless he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these I speak unto the world.** To all that He says they may turn a deaf ear; 'Nevertheless,' Jesus adds, 'He that sent me is true, and the words which I have heard from Him, these and no others do I speak unto the world—the *world,* to which you belong' (ver. 23). The Jews may disbelieve; His judgment may seem severe; but the words are God's words, and they are true. Three other explanations are worthy of consideration—(1) I have many things . . . but, many as they are, they are true. (2) I have many things . . . but I will not keep them back, for I faithfully declare the words which . . . (3) I have many things . . . but I will not say them now: the things which I have heard from Him that sent me must be first declared. The first of these seems to miss the sharp emphasis of the 'Nevertheless;' the second and third to miss (though

27 these speak I [1]unto the world.* They perceived not
28 that he spake to them of the Father. Jesus therefore
said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then
shall ye know that [2]I am *he*,† and *that* I do nothing
of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these

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[1] Gr. *into*.

* "unto the world" omit marg. [3] "Gr. *into*."—*Am. Com.*

[2] Or, *I am*. Or, *I am* he; *and I do*.

† "I am *he*" omit marg. [1] (and the corresponding portion of marg. [4]). So in 13: 19.—*Am. Com.*

in different degrees) the force of the middle clause: 'Nevertheless He that sent me is true.'

Ver. 27. **They perceived not that he spake to them of the Father.** This statement of the Evangelist is very remarkable; and, as it is so different from anything we might have expected, its importance as a guide and correction is the greater. In this section (beginning at ver. 21), He has not made mention of 'the Father.' In the section which precedes, however (vers. 12–20), the word occurs several times. First, Jesus speaks of 'the Father who sent me' (vers. 16, 18): in their answer the Jews show how they had understood His words by saying: 'Where is *thy Father?*' and in replying to their question, Jesus also speaks, not of 'the Father,' but of 'My Father.' So far as these two sections are concerned, therefore, there is nothing to show that His hearers had understood Him to make distinct mention of '*the* Father,' in the absolute sense—a name which, probably, every Israelite would have received as belonging to God alone. Hence—though we might have overlooked the fact but for the Evangelist's timely words—we cannot feel great surprise that these hearers had not yet perceived that Jesus was making mention of 'the Father.' The words: 'I am from above,' 'He that sent me,' must have suggested to those who heard, that He claimed a Divine mission; but men familiar with the mission of a prophet might concede so much without understanding that the last words of Jesus ('the things which *I heard from Him* I speak unto the world') implied an infinitely higher and closer relation to Him whom they worshipped, whom Jesus revealed as 'the Father.' In this Name and in the words just spoken is contained the whole economy of grace.

Ver. 28. **Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted on high the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and that of myself I do nothing; but even as the Father taught me, I speak these things.** They know not the truth now; when through their own deed the Son of man has been raised on high, their eyes will be opened, they will see what they have done, and will then know that His words were true, that the claims which they resisted the Father Himself has ratified. The 'lifting on high' includes both the death and the glorification of Jesus, though the latter meaning

29 things. And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that
30 are pleasing to him. As he spake these things, many believed on him.

31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly

only would be understood as yet (see the note on chap. 3: 14). Some prefer to place a stop at the word *am*, and to take the clauses that follow as independent. This view, however, seems much less natural than the other. The three parallel clauses—containing the thoughts of (1) pure existence (as to what is implied in this, see ver. 24), (2) continued dependence on the Father in all action (see chap. 5: 19, 20), and (3), as a part of such action, speaking in constant harmony with the Father's will and teaching (chap. 5: 30; ver. 26)—express the claims made by Jesus, the truth of which (of each and of all) will be established when He is 'lifted up on high.'

Ver. 29. **And he that sent me is with me: he left me not alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him.** When the Father sent the Son, He sent Him not away from Himself—not for a moment did He leave him alone. The abiding presence of the Father is the consequence and the sign of the Son's habitual performance of the Father's will. In all this Jesus is speaking as the Son of man, as the Sent of the Father. It is most interesting to compare the corresponding words of chap. 5, where the subject throughout is the Son of God. It will be seen how prominent are two thoughts in this chapter—the association of Jesus with the Father who sent Him (vers. 16, 18, 23, 26, 28, 29, 38, 40, 42, 47, 54, 55), and the strong moral contrast between Jesus and the Jews (vers. 15, 21, 23, 24, 37, 38, 40, etc.). The observance of this will make clearer the links connecting the several parts.

Ver. 30. **As he spake these things, many believed in him.** We are not told to what class these belonged. The latter part of the chapter shows how completely 'the Jews' had hardened themselves: probably therefore these believers mainly belonged to the general body of the hearers, and not (in any large proportion) to 'the Jews.' Once more then we have an illustration of that two-fold effect of our Lord's teaching which John so frequently portrays.

Ver. 31. **Jesus said therefore to the Jews who had believed him.** The word 'therefore' closely joins this section with the last. Are we then to regard the Jews of this verse as included in the 'many' of the last? Certainly not, because of the essential difference between the expressions used in the two verses—'believed in him' and 'believed him.' The former denotes a true faith in Jesus, such an acceptance of Him as includes a surrender of the heart, the 'self,' to Him; the latter, an acceptance of His words as true. Those who 'believed Him' were in the way towards the higher faith, but

32 my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the
33 truth shall make you free. They answered unto him,
We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in
bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be

yet might be very far from the attainment of that goal. The impression produced by the last words spoken by Jesus appears to have been very great, bringing many to the position of full discipleship, and even convincing some of the hostile Jews themselves that they had been opposing one whose words were true, and whose claims on their obedience were just and right. These men stand between the two companies—the Jews with whom they had been associated, and the believers who had joined themselves to the Lord. Will they draw nearer to Him and '*believe in Him*,' or will they return to His enemies? The words which Jesus now speaks, to instruct and to encourage, prove to be the test of their faith.—**If ye shall abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples.** They believed His word; if they abide in this word of His—clinging to it, continuing under its influence—the word will be to them a revelation of Jesus, and will assert its power. Note the significance ever attached in this Gospel to the word of Jesus. As He, the Word, reveals the Father, and leads to the Father, so His own word reveals Himself, and draws men to Himself through (so teaches the fuller revelation) the power of the Spirit of Truth.

Ver. 32. **And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.** If they shall abide in the word of Jesus, it will be shown that they have begun a true discipleship, and the word in which they abide shall make known to them the truth. So far, there is nothing that these imperfect disciples will not gladly hear. But Jesus read in their hearts a false interpretation of His work and their own needs. He came as Saviour (chap. 3: 16, 36; 4: 42; 5: 40), not as Teacher only: in this very chapter He has spoken of faith in Himself as delivering from death in sins (ver. 24). Here the figure is changed from that of future death to that of present and continued bondage: 'the truth' shall be the means of giving freedom. There is no difficulty in these words: such appropriation of the truth found in the words of Jesus is but another representation of faith in Him who is the Giver of freedom.

Ver. 33. **They answered him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been slaves to any one: how sayest thou, Ye shall become free?** The promise: 'shall make you free,' implies that now they have no freedom, but are slaves. This thought they indignantly repel, for they are Abraham's seed! What is the true meaning of the next words, is a question much disputed. It is hardly possible that they refer directly to *national* freedom, for the first words of the Decalogue speak of their deliverance from the house of bondage, and this history had often been repeated. Nor can

34 made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily,
I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin
35 is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant
abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth

we think that the Jews are simply appealing to the law which made it impossible for an Israelite to be kept in (continued) bondage. The former supposition involves too bold a falsehood; the latter, too prosaic and strained an interpretation in a context which contains no hint of civil rights. And yet there is truth in both. To be of Abraham's seed and to be a slave were discordant ideas. To Abraham was given the promise that he should be 'heir of the world' (Rom. 4: 13); the Divine nobility of his descendants was only brought out more clearly by their frequent adverse fortune. Theirs was a religious pre-eminence above all nations of the world—a freedom which no external circumstances could affect. National independence was natural (though not always enjoyed), because of this Divinely-given honor; in the same gift of God lay the principle of the Israelite's civil freedom. Least of all (they thought) could they, whose boast was that the truth was theirs, be held in a slavery from which the truth should free them.

Ver. 34. **Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that doeth sin is a slave of sin.** Jesus directs them to a slavery of which they have not thought,—slavery to sin. Every one who is living a life of sin is a slave; each act of sin is no mere accident of his life, but a token of its nature, a mark of a bondage in which he is continually held. The word 'doeth' is not the same as that which is used in chap. 3: 20; 5: 29 in connection with evil: that had reference to the commission of particular acts, this to the general course of life, when sin *is chosen*,—'Evil be thou my good.' The thought is best illustrated by Rom. 6, and (especially) 7.

Ver. 35. **And the slave abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever.** The Jews believed that they were free, the sons of God; and that, as such, they were permanent possessors of His house, and thus permanent recipients of His favor and love, inheritors of eternal life. Not so. In all this they deceived themselves. They are not God's sons, but slaves of sin. As such they have no more real hold of the house of God, with its present and eternal privileges, than a slave has of the privileges of the house in which he is a slave. A son only can claim a place in the house and the possession of what belongs to the house, as a right permanent, uninterrupted, as long as he is a son. In all this, no doubt, there lies a reference to their own history. As the son of the bondwoman Hagar in the house of Abraham, so were they in the house of God: as Ishmael (though Abraham's seed) was driven forth, having no place beside the son who was free, so must they who claimed to be Abraham's seed be cast out, if they are slaves of sin.

36 for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free
37 ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word
38 [1]hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with [2]*my* Father: and ye also do

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[1] Or, *hath no place in you.*

[2] Or, *the Father; do ye also therefore the things which ye heard from the Father.*

Ver. 36. **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.** It is manifestly a special freedom that is here thought of,—freedom gained by becoming sons, and thus gaining all that belongs to the position of a son, retaining for ever a connection with the Father's house. One only can give this freedom, for One only can give this Sonship,—He who is the Son (see chap. 1 : 12). 'Free indeed,' not in appearance only, as a favored slave might seem for a time to hold the place of a son in the house: 'free indeed,' because receiving the freedom and sonship from One who 'remains in the house for ever,' and never loses the rights of the Son. Ver. 33 speaks of the means ('the truth'), this verse of the Giver of freedom ('the Son'). The word here rendered 'indeed' is a very remarkable one: it is used nowhere else in the writings of John. Closely connected with the verb 'I am' of ver. 28, it is designedly employed in order to bring out that closeness of relation between the sons of God and the Son which is so striking a part of the teaching of this chapter.

Ver. 37. **I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word maketh no way in you.** Again our Lord takes up their assertion that they are Abraham's seed. He has answered it by a parable: He speaks now in plainer words, repeating their familiar boast, that He may place in strongest contrast the spirit they had shown themselves to possess. 'Ye seek to kill me,' He says, uniting them with the whole body from which a little before they seemed to be severed; for too clearly did He see that the severance was but partial and altogether transient. His word had entered their hearts, and for a moment they had moved toward Him; but it made no way there, its progress was immediately stayed, and they were numbered again with 'the Jews,' His foes. Hence the increasing severity of what is immediately to follow.

Ver. 38. **I speak the things which I have seen with the Father: do ye also therefore the things which ye heard from the Father.** One last exhortation Jesus will offer before entirely giving up these 'Jews who had believed Him.' His word had entered their heart but had made no way: let them give it free course now. He, the Son, who alone can give them freedom and sonship by the truth revealed in His word (vers. 32, 36), has in that word spoken to them the things which He saw with the Father (another mode of expressing the same truth as is declared in chap. 3 : 13). With design He says '*the* Father,' not '*My* Father;' for the

39 the things which ye heard from *your* father. They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham.

word has been spoken to them in order that God who is His Father may become their Father,—in other words, that the Son may give them sonship. For this very purpose the Father sent Him to declare the word: this He has done, so that what they had heard from Jesus they had heard from the Father. Let them *do* that which they have heard and the blessing of sonship shall be theirs. (It is interesting to compare the 'knowing' which gives freedom (ver. 32) with this command to 'do' what they had heard. In effect the same result is promised, so that the *knowledge* spoken of must be such as involves *doing*,—no barren knowledge, but one that grasps and moulds the life). But we must not overlook the 'therefore' which binds together the two parts of the verse. In the execution of the design of God, to make men His sons and thus become sons of 'the Father,' two things are necessary: the Son (the 'Word') declares the truth of God; men receive the word of the Son, know it—with that knowledge which implies both faith and action—and become the sons of God. The Son has been faithful to His mission,—this the first clause declares: let them *therefore* be faithful to their part, and the blessing will be theirs. The more common view of this verse assumes that in the second clause Jesus speaks of another father. This is very unlikely, as the pronoun *your* is not inserted until a later verse (ver. 41). There are also two other reasons for preferring the interpretation given above: (1) It is hard to believe that Jesus, so tender in His dealing with even the germs of true faith, has already passed into His severest condemnation of 'the Jews who had believed Him.' No word has been spoken by them since that recorded in ver. 33, and it had shown blindness and self-deception, but not hopeless antagonism. True, He sees that in their hearts they are relapsing into their former state; but may we not well believe that He will make one other effort to instruct and save? (2) As we have already seen (ver. 27), in our Lord's words '*the* Father' is a Name used with great significance and fulness of meaning, especially in this chapter. This is duly recognised in the explanation we are now seeking to defend, and in that alone.—It is remarkable that in this verse Jesus describes Himself as speaking what He has *seen with the Father*, while He exhorts them to do what they have *heard from the Father*. But the words are deliberately chosen, and they confirm the interpretation now given. As the Eternal Son, Jesus alone could have the first words spoken of Him. The second appropriately describe the state of those who had not 'seen,' who had only 'heard.' The difference, in short, flows from that difference between the Son and all other sons which abides even in the midst of similarity of position: the One has an eternal, the others have only a derived, Sonship.

Ver. 39. **They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.** This answer shows how their minds are closing against

Jesus saith unto them, if ye [1] were Abraham's chil-
40 dren, [2] ye would do the works of Abraham. But
now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the
truth which I heard from God: this did not Abra-
41 ham. Ye do the works of your father. They said
unto him, We are not born of fornication; we have

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[1] Gr. *are.* [2] Some ancient authorities read *ye do the works of Abraham.*

the word of Jesus. Had they been willing to recognise the true meaning of 'the Father' in the first clause (of ver. 38), they might have seen what the same Name implied for them in the later words. But whilst He spoke of God and sought to lead them upwards, they, proud of their ancestry and content with Jewish privilege, will think of no other father than Abraham. Yet plainer words therefore must be used to make them understand the truth.—**Jesus saith unto them, If ye are Abraham's children, do the works of Abraham.** There is no true sonship (in the sense in which Jesus is dwelling on the idea) where there is not likeness. Descent from Abraham cannot be a source of present honor and blessing to those who do not Abraham's works. They are Abraham's 'seed' (ver. 37), not his 'children' (comp. 1: 12).

Ver. 40. **But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath spoken to you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham.** The assertion of vers. 37, 38 is reiterated, but now with a simple directness that cannot be misunderstood (thus Jesus no longer speaks of 'the Father' out of God), and with a distinct expression of the contrast ('this did not Abraham') which in ver. 37 has been merely implied. True kindred to Abraham is therefore impossible in their case.

Ver. 41. **Ye do the works of your father.** Yet the principle of ver. 39 cannot but be true: certainly they are doing the works *of their father.*—**They said to him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.** The words of Jesus have made two things clear:—(1) He is not referring to national origin, but to spiritual descent; and (2) the father whose sons Jesus declares them to be is not good but evil. In answer to this they indignantly assert that they are sons of God. Their spiritual is as undoubted as their natural descent. 'Whatever may be the case with others (the word "we" is strongly emphatic), there is no stain on our origin.' We cannot but think that some antithesis is distinctly present to the thought of the Jews as they use the words 'we' and 'one.' And if we bear in mind the regular meaning which the word 'fornication' bears in Old Testament prophecy, when used in such a connection as this, viz. the unholy alliance with idols instead of Jehovah (Jer. 3: 1, etc.), it will appear very probable that ver. 48 gives the clue to the meaning here. Jesus was called a Samaritan. Sa-

42 one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God
were your Father, ye would love me: for I came
forth and am come from God; for neither have I
43 come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not
[1]understand my speech? *Even* because ye cannot
44 hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and
the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was
a murderer from the beginning, and [2]stood * not in

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[1] Or, *know*. [2] Some ancient authorities read *standeth*.

* For 'stood' read 'standeth' and omit marg. [1].—*Am. Com.*

maritans were taunted with their descent from men who 'feared Jehovah and served their own gods,' (2 Kings 17: 33). This thought, not yet plainly expressed, but existing in their minds, explains at once the emphatic 'we,' the reference to 'fornication,' and the stress laid on '*one* Father.'

Ver. 42. **Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for from God I came forth, and am here, for also I have not come of myself, but he sent me.** Again Jesus applies the same principle to test their claim. Were they true children of God, then they would love whomsoever God loves. But this they do not, for they love not Him who came forth from God and whom God sent. The words in which Jesus speaks of His relation to God are remarkable. Alike in His *Incarnation*, in His whole *manifestation* to the world, and in His *mission*, He sustains *the same* relation to the Father: all is from and of the Father. This intimate relation implies the love on which the argument is made to rest.

Ver. 43. **Why do ye not know my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word.** There is a subtle difference between 'word' and 'speech,' the former properly referring to substance. the latter to the form. (Thus in Matt. 26: 73, when the same word is used, it is said that Peter's Galilean 'speech' bewrayed him). Did they hear His word, were they really sons of God, they would recognise his speech, and the indications (if we may so speak) contained in it of the speech of that heavenly realm from which He came. But they could not bear to hear His word: what He taught was hateful to them, though it was the truth which He heard from God (ver 40). This antipathy to the substance of what He said made any recognition of the teaching as bearing on itself manifest tokens of Divine origin impossible.

Ver. 44. **Ye are of the father who is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do.** It seems desirable to preserve in translation the expression 'the father' (for 'your' is not found in the Greek), because it seems to be our Lord's design to set this in strongest contrast to the name which He has used with most

the truth, because there is no truth in him. [1]When
he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he
45 is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say
46 the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you con-
victeth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not

[1] Or, *When one speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for his father is also a liar.*

significant emphasis, 'the Father' (see the notes on vers. 27 and 38). All the desires of their father it was their will to do. Their works, deliberately chosen, answered to their parentage: hence their seeking to kill Jesus (vers. 37, 40), and that inability to listen to His word (ver. 43).—**He was a man-killer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth.** Well may they seek to kill Jesus, for their father, the devil, was a man-killer from the beginning of his dealings with mankind. His seduction of mankind was itself a murder, severing man from the life of God, and bringing in the evil that has been the cause of every crime. Thus he is the shedder 'of all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.' Not only was he a man-killer, but he 'stood not in the truth.'* It does not seem likely that these words refer to the fall of the 'angels who kept not their first estate,' for then surely the order of the clauses would have been reversed. Throughout all past history the devil shunned 'the truth,' took his stand without the borders of 'the truth,' because this action alone is suitable to his essential (though not original) nature.—**Because there is no truth in him.** His hatred of 'the truth' springs from this, that he is not true; 'truth' (now used without the article) is not in him; and his own hatred of the truth is transmitted to his children, who cannot hear of the word of Jesus (ver. 43)—**Whensoever one speaketh the lie, he speaketh of his own, because his father also is a liar.** Whensoever a man who is a child of the devil uttereth falsehood, he is giving forth what by very nature belongs to him, what is his peculiar property by right of kindred and inheritance,—because his father also, the devil, is a liar.

Ver. 45. **But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.** They loved the lie, because their father was a liar, and his desires it was their will to do. Such was their love for falsehood (even as their father 'stood not in the truth'), that, because Jesus said the truth, they believed Him not. The word 'I' is emphatic, marking again the contrast between them and Him.

Ver. 46. **Which of you convicteth me of sin?** No charge of sin could any one of them bring home to Him, no responsive consciousness of sin could any one awaken in His breast. These words are implicitly an assertion of His perfect sinlessness; and His enemies are silent.—**If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?** Their knowledge of His sinless life took from them all pretext for their dis-

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* Not 'standeth:' the word is probably an imperfect (of στήκω).

47 believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of
God: for this cause ye hear *them* not, because ye are
48 not of God. The Jews answered and said unto him,
Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and
49 hast a [1]devil? Jesus answered, I have not a [2]devil;

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[1] Gr. *demon.*

[2] Gr. *demon.*

belief. We know that His words brought their own evidence to those who loved the truth. The true answer to this question then must be that they loved falsehood. But this answer they would never give. The tone of this verse clearly shows that what has been said of their father the devil related not to necessity of nature, but to deliberate choice (see note on ver. 23), for such an appeal was intended, and would be understood, to imply condemnation of those who thus wilfully refused to believe. The same thought is present in the following verse.

Ver. 47. **He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear not, because ye are not of God.** As in ver. 43, the word *hear* has the meaning *listen to*, so that the thought of receiving and believing is implied. He that is of God, and he alone, thus listens to the words of God: recognising their origin, willing to receive their teaching, he takes them into his heart.

Ver. 48. **The Jews answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?** To say that Jews were children of the devil seemed an insult, not to themselves only, but to God, whose children they believed themselves to be. No one but a Samaritan, filled with jealous hatred of the people of God, or one in whom dwelt a demon, one of the spirits whose sole aim was the subversion of God's kingdom, could utter such words as these. It is possible that the Jews may have heard something of our Lord's short sojourn in Samaria, and of the favor which He had then shown to that despised people: such a parable as that of the Good Samaritan (which was spoken at a time not far distant from that to which this chapter relates) may have been so used by enemies as to give color to an accusation of favoring Samaria and slighting Judæa. At all events it is clear that the name 'Samaritan' was now frequently given to our Lord as a term of reproach.—We must not overlook the fact that those who are now addressing Jesus are 'the Jews,'—not a part (ver. 31), but the Jews as a body.

Ver. 49. **Jesus answered, I have not a demon: but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me.** His answer is a simple denial of the graver accusation of the two, and also such an assertion regarding His thought and purpose as was equivalent to a denial of all such charges. He honors His Father,—even in the very words which had seemed to them an insult to God Himself. 'It is ye,' He adds, 'that are dishonoring me:' it is not I who (like Samaritans) dishonor you.

50 but I honor my Father, and ye dishonor me. But
I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh
51 and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a
52 man keep my word, he shall never see death. The
Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast
a [1]devil. Abraham is dead* and the prophets; and,
thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never

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[1] Gr. *demon.*

* For "is dead" and "are dead" read "died" (Comp. 6: 40, 58).—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 50. **But I seek not my glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.** He will not protest against the dishonor they offer Him: His cause is in the Father's hand. That glory which He seeks not for Himself, the Father seeks to give Him. The Father is deciding, and will decide between His enemies and Himself.

Ver. 51. **Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man have kept my word he shall never behold death.** The solemn introductory words indicate that the discourse is taking a higher strain: once before they have been used in this chapter, in ver. 34 (but to a part only of 'the Jews'), and once again we shall meet with them (ver. 58). In ver. 34 Jesus is speaking of *slavery* from which He frees; here of *death* which He abolishes (2 Tim. 1: 10). In the former case the means of deliverance is continuing in the word of Jesus and knowing the truth (see ver. 32); here He gives the promise to him that has 'kept His word,'—has received it, hidden it in his heart, and observed it in his life (see ver. 37, also chap. 14: 15, etc.). The thought here is substantially the same as in (chap. 4: 14; 5: 24; 6: 51), where we read of the living bread given that a man may eat of it and not die. That passage presents one side of the condition, the close fellowship of the believer with Jesus Himself, of which eating is the symbol; this presents another side, the believing reception of His word (which reveals Himself), and the practical and continuous observance of the precepts therein contained. In chap. 6: 50, the words 'may not die' do not seem to have been misunderstood,—possibly because so near the promise of 'eternal life,' which suggested a figurative meaning, possibly because of a difference in the mood and disposition of the hearers. In neither place did Jesus promise that they who are His shall not pass through the grave, but that to them death shall not be death,—in death itself they shall live (see chap. 9: 26).

Vers. 52, 53. **The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man have kept my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? and the prophets died: whom makest thou thyself?** The word 'now' looks back to ver. 48. 'Even if we were too hasty then, *now* we have learnt from thine own words that our charge is true.' In attributing to His word a power to

53 taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead:*
54 whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me; of whom ye say, that he is your
55 God; and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word.

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*For "is dead" and "are dead" read "died" (Compare 6: 40, 58).—*Am. Com.*

preserve His followers from that which had come upon the prophets, and even on Abraham himself, He is clearly placing Himself above Abraham and the prophets. Whom then is He making Himself?—The Jews do not quote the words of Jesus with exactness. He had said, 'shall never behold death,'—for ever shall be spared the sight of death; they vary the metaphor a little, passing to a still more familiar phrase, 'taste death;' perhaps because it seemed more distinct and clear, less susceptible of a figurative meaning.

Vers. 54, 55A. **Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom ye say that he is your God, and have not got knowledge of him.** First, Jesus answers the direct question, 'Whom makest Thou Thyself?' and the general charge of self-exaltation which those words contain. The specific reference to Abraham He speaks of afterwards (ver. 56). The tenor of His reply resembles that of ver. 50; but, as elsewhere, the second statement has the greater force and clearness. The reality of the glory of Jesus consists in this, that it comes from His Father, whom they called their God, but of whom they had gained no knowledge.

Ver. 55 B. **But I know him; and if I should say I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word.** Jesus can say, 'I know God,' by direct, intuitive, perfect knowledge. The word which He uses in reference to Himself ('I know') is different from that used in the preceding clause, this latter ('ye have got knowledge') referring to the result of experience, to knowledge gained by many acts of perception. Were Jesus to deny His immediate knowledge, He would be as false as they have been in professing to know God. The last words are interesting as bringing out once more the truth which we have seen presented in earlier verses: His own work in the execution of the Father's will is the model of the work which He requires from man. His people 'keep His word' (ver. 51): He Himself keeps the Father's word. So, in chap. 20: 21, He says to the apostles, 'As my Father hath sent me, I also send you.'

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced [1]to see my day; and

[1] Or, *that he should see.*

Ver. 56. **Your father Abraham exulted that he should see my day; and he saw it and rejoiced.** This translation, though more exact than that of the Authorized Version, does not fully bring out the meaning of the original. All English renderings of the words (unless they are paraphrases) must be more or less ambiguous. 'Rejoiced to see' conveys the meaning of 'rejoiced because (or when) he saw;' exulted that he should see, means strictly, 'exulted in the knowledge that he should see.' Nor is the difficulty removed if we take the ordinary rendering of the Greek construction, 'that he might;' for *exulted that he might see* is ambiguous still, though not in the same way. Perhaps the Greek words (which are very peculiar) are best represented by the paraphrase, 'Your father Abraham exulted in desire that he might see my day; and he saw (it) and rejoiced.' The interpretation, which is as difficult as the translation, turns mainly on the meaning of the words 'my day.' The nearest approach to this expression in the New Testament is found in Luke 17: 22, 'one of the days of the Son of man,' where the meaning must be 'one of the days connected with the manifestation of the Son of man upon the earth.' Here the form is more definite, 'my day,' and it seems exceedingly difficult to give any other meaning than either the whole period of the life of Jesus on earth, or, more precisely, the epoch of the Incarnation. In this case the past tense 'he saw it' is conclusive for the latter, if actual sight is intended. The patriarch received the promise in which was contained the coming of the day of Christ. By faith he saw this day in the far distance, but—more than this—exulting in the prospect he longed to see the day itself: in joyful hope he waited for this. In the fulness of time the day dawned; the heavenly host sang praises to God for its advent; and (none who remember the appearance of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration can feel any difficulty in the words of this verse) Abraham too saw it and rejoiced. By those who do not accept this explanation it is urged—(1) That Jesus would probably not thus refer the Jews to that which no Scripture records. But the truth spoken of is so general and so simple—Abraham's knowledge of the fulfilment of God's promises to him—that no Jew who believed in Jesus could refuse it credence. (2) That 'sees' and 'rejoices' would be more natural than 'saw' and 'rejoiced.' Not so, if the Incarnation is the event before the mind. (3) That this view is not in harmony with the reply of the Jews in the next verse. That point will be considered in the note on the verse. The only other possible interpretation is that which refers the words to two distinct periods in the earthly life of Abraham; one at which, after receiving the promise, he exulted in eager desire for a clearer sight, and another at which this clearer sight was gained. But it is very hard to think of two epochs in the patriarch's life at which these conditions were satisfied; and it is still more difficult to believe that 'my day' is the expression

57 he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said
unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast
58 thou seen Abraham? Jesus saith unto them, Verily,
verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham [1] was,* I
59 am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him;

[1] Gr. *was born.*

* For "was" read "was born" and omit marg. 1—*Am. Com.*

that Jesus would have used had this been the sense designed. Verily, if Abraham thus exulted in the thought of the coming of his son and his Lord, the Jews who are despising and rejecting Him do not Abraham's works, are no true seed of Abraham.

Ver. 57. **The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?** The Jews understand 'my day' to mean the time of His life; and His knowing that Abraham has witnessed this with joy must certainly imply that He has seen Abraham. How can this be, since He is not fifty years of age? It seems most probable that 'fifty' is chosen as a round number, as a number certainly beyond that of our Lord's years of life. Some have supposed from this verse that sorrow had given to Him the appearance of premature age when He was only thirty. Not likely.

Ver. 58. **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am.** The third occurrence of the solemn formula, 'Verily, verily,' marks the highest point reached by the words of Jesus at this time. The substance of the words is in completest harmony with the form. In the clearest possible manner Jesus declares, not only His existence before Abraham, but also the essential distinction between His being and that of any man. Man is born, man passes through successive periods of time: of Himself, in regard alike to past, present, and future, Jesus says 'I am.' He claims for Himself that absolute, unchanging existence which is the attribute of God alone. If any argument be needed to enforce that which the words themselves supply, it is furnished in the conduct of the Jews (ver. 59), who clearly understood them to be a distinct (and in their mind a blasphemous) claim of that which belonged to God alone. The thought is distinctly present in the Old Testament: see Ps. 102: 27, but especially Ps. 90: 2. The English reader naturally recurs in thought to Ex. 3: 14, but there are two considerations which make it very difficult to assert positively that that verse is necessarily referred to here: (1) The doubt which rests on the translation. 'I will be' is at least as natural as a translation as 'I am.' (2) The Greek translation of the Divine Name there used differs materially from the words of this verse, and agrees rather with the original of Rev. 1: 4. If our version does really express the meaning of Ex. 3: 14, it is impossible not to associate that verse with the one before us.

Ver. 59. **They took up stones therefore that they might cast them upon him; but Jesus hid himself, and went forth** but Jesus [1] hid himself, and he went out of the temple.[2]

## CHAPTER 9: 1–12.

### *The Opening of the Eyes of the Blind Man.*

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his
2 birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi,

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[1] Or, *was hidden, and went, &c.*

[2] Many ancient authorities add *and going through the midst of them went his way, and so passed by.*

**from the temple-courts.** The Jews were enraged at what they considered blasphemy, and in their rage they would have stoned Him (compare chap. 10: 31). But His hour was not yet come. He hid Himself (whether miraculously or not we cannot tell), and went forth from the temple.

### *The Opening of the Eyes of the Blind Man*, vers. 1–12.

CONTENTS.—The conflict of Jesus with the Jews begins to draw to a close. At the last verse of the preceding chapter, Jesus had hidden Himself and gone out of the temple, leaving it in possession of those who had wilfully blinded themselves against His claims, who must now therefore be left to the darkness which they have chosen, and from whom such as will behold in Him the Light of Life must be withdrawn. This great truth is illustrated by the story of the man born blind, upon whom a miracle of healing is performed. The enmity of the Jews is roused; but in the process raised by them, they are defeated, and the blind man, cast out by his former co-religionists, becomes a trophy of the power and grace of the persecuted Redeemer.

Ver. 1. **And as he passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth.** There is nothing to connect this chapter with the last, in regard to time or place. The day to which the narrative refers was a Sabbath (ver. 14); the blind man (who was of Jewish birth; see ver. 34) had been wont to sit and beg from passers-by (ver. 8), perhaps at the gates of the temple, like the lame man, Acts 3. The two points which John brings before us are simply that the case of the afflicted man was (in itself) hopeless, and that the Saviour saw him as He passed by. The obvious purpose of this latter statement is to direct our thoughts to the spontaneous compassion of Jesus. The man said nothing, did nothing, to awaken His pity, nor did the question of the disciples in ver. 2 first call His attention to the case. He feels and acts Himself; and the interest of the disciples does not precede, but follow, that shown by their Master.

Ver. 2. **And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?** It is not said that the disciples were moved to pity; but it is not right to assume the contrary. That Jesus had looked on the blind man would be enough to raise their expectation of a cure; but expressly to relate this might well seem needless. Whatever feeling,

who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should
3 be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this
man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God

however, the sight may have stirred in them, it recalled a problem which was very familiar to the thought of the Jews, and which repeatedly meets us in the Scriptures of the Old Testament—the connection between personal sin and bodily suffering or defect. Here was a signal example of physical infirmity; what was its cause? In assuming that the blindness was the consequence of sin, they were following the current theology of their time; but how was this dogma to be applied in the case before them? Who had sinned? Was it the man himself? Or had his parents committed some offence which was now visited upon their child? (Comp. Ex. 20: 5; 34: 7; Num. 14: 18, 33; Jer. 32: 18.) As to the former alternative, three explanations deserve mention. (1) We are told by Josephus, that the Pharisees held the belief that, whereas the souls of the wicked are eternally punished, the souls of the righteous pass into other bodies. Hence it has been maintained that the Pharisees held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; and the passage before us is frequently explained accordingly. If, however, we compare all the passages in which Josephus refers to tenets of the Pharisees respecting the state of man after death, it will at least appear very uncertain that such a meaning should be attached to his words as quoted above. It is very possible that the historian is there referring entirely to a state of being beyond the limits of this world's history; or that, in the attempt to present the belief of his countrymen in a form familiar to the Roman conquerors, he has used language which conveys an erroneous impression. At all events, we cannot assume that the transmigration of souls was a tenet widely embraced by the Jewish people of that age, without far stronger evidence than we now possess. (2) The philosophic doctrine of the pre-existence of souls was certainly held by many Jews at the time of Christ. As early as the Book of Wisdom we find a reference to it (see chap. 8: 19, 20), and passages of similar tendency may easily be quoted from Philo. (3) It seems to have been an ancient Jewish opinion, that sin could be committed by the unborn child; and that the narrative of Gen. 25, appearing to teach that the odious character of a supplanter belonged to Jacob even before birth, gave the authority of Scripture to such a belief. On the whole this affords the best explanation of the question of the disciples: Was the sin so severely punished committed by this man himself, in the earliest period of his existence, or have the iniquities of his parents been visited upon him?

Ver. 3. **Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.** Jesus does not deny the presence of sin in the man himself or in his parents; His words must be read in close connection with the question to which they form a reply. The meaning of the whole verse (which is unusually elliptical) may be given thus:

4 should be made manifest in him. We must work
the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the
5 night cometh, when no man can work. When I am
6 in the world, I am the light of the world. When he
had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made
clay of the spittle, [1]and anointed his eyes with the

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[1] Or, *and with the clay thereof anointed* his *eyes.*

"Neither did this man sin nor his parents that he should be born blind, but (he was born blind—he is as he is) that the works of God may be manifested in him.' Not to suggest or unravel speculative questions, but to present a sphere for the manifestation of the works of God, hath this man borne this infirmity. The last clause of the verse does not simply mean that a miracle is to be wrought on him: '*in* him'—alike in his physical (vers. 6, 7) and in his spiritual healing (vers. 36–38)—the love and grace of God are to be made manifest.

Ver. 4. **We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no one can work.** The substitution of 'we' for 'I' (a change supported by the best evidence) lends peculiar force and beauty to the verse. Jesus associates His disciples with Himself; like Himself they have a calling which must not be disobeyed, to work the works of God; for them, as for Himself, the period of such action will not always last. He does not say: 'Him that sent *us*,' for it is the Son who sends His disciples, even as the Father sends the Son (chap. 20: 21). 'Day' is used in this proverbial saying simply to denote the time during which the working assigned to Jesus and His people in this world can be performed; 'night,' the time when the working is impossible. It is true that the Lord Jesus continues to work by His Spirit, and through His servants, though the 'day' of which He here speaks soon reached its close.

Ver. 5. **Whensoever I am in the world, I am the light of the world.** The work of Jesus in the world is to be the world's light. This thought, expressed in words in the last chapter (chap. 8: 12), and in this by deeds, binds together the different portions in this section of the Gospel. 'I am the light,' Jesus says; but even in this figure the 'we' of the last verse may be remembered, for his disciples also 'are the light of the world' (Matt. 5: 14). The first word of the verse is worthy of all attention, pointing as it does to all periods at which 'the light' hath shined amid the darkness of this world (chap. 1: 5).

Vers. 6, 7. **When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and with his clay anointed his eyes, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is, by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.** In

7 clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went

the case of no miracle which Jesus wrought is His procedure as remarkable as it is here. We may at once dismiss the thought that such a mode of cure was in itself *necessary:* whatever may have been the design of Jesus in making use of it, He needed no instrument or means of cure. The means of healing had in most cases some reference to the mental condition of the sufferer, and here His procedure was well fitted to awaken and make trial of faith; but it is impossible to rest satisfied with any such explanation. The language of the Evangelist compels us to look upon the whole action as symbolical. The introductory words link these verses to those in which Jesus speaks of the manifestation of Himself to the world (vers. 4, 5); the interpretation of the name Siloam leads us back to the thought of Him who everywhere in this Gospel is solemnly before us as 'the Sent of God.' These indications teach us to see in the whole action of Jesus a special symbolical reference to Himself and His work. The anointing of the eyes with spittle was a common practice, adopted for medicinal effect; but no such usage has any connection with this passage, for the eyes were anointed, not with the spittle, but with the *clay*. Having made the clay, He anointed 'with His clay' the blind man's eyes. The original words lay emphasis on the clay *made by Jesus*, and thus bring Himself, not merely the clay that He has made, but 'His clay,' into prominence—the clay in which something of His personality is expressed. (Some of the Fathers imagine that there is a reference to Gen. 2: 7; but this seems too remote.) Again, the word 'anointed' no doubt contains an allusion to Jesus the *Christ*, the Anointed One. The name of the pool Siloam or (according to the Hebrew form) Siloah is the last point to be noted, and here the meaning is supplied by John himself. As originally given to the pool, it is supposed to mean 'sent forth,' *i. e.* issuing forth, said of the waters that issue from the springs that feed the pool, or of the waters which issue from the pool to the fields around. From this pool water had been drawn to pour upon the altar during the feast just past (see chap. 7: 38); it was associated with the wells of salvation of which Isaiah speaks (chap. 12: 3), and the pouring out of its water symbolized the effusion of spiritual blessing in the days of the Messiah. With most natural interest, therefore, the Evangelist observes that its very name corresponds to the Messiah; and by pointing out this fact, indicates to us what was the object of Jesus in sending the man to these waters. In this even more distinctly than in the other particulars that we have noted, Jesus, whilst sending the man away from Him, is keeping Himself before him in everything connected with his cure. Thus throughout the whole narrative all attention is concentrated on Jesus Himself, who is 'the Light of the world;' who was 'sent of God' to 'open blind eyes:' every particular is fraught with instruction to the disciples, who are to continue His work after His departure, and who must be

8 away therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they which saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that
9 sat and begged? Others said, It is he: others said,
10 No, but he is like him. He said, I am *he*. They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes
11 opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed,
12 and I received sight. And they said unto him, Where is he? He saith, I know not.

## CHAPTER. 9: 13—10: 21.

### *Jesus the Light separating between the light and the darkness.*

13 They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime

taught that they can bring sight to the blind only by directing them to Jesus their Lord. The pool of Siloam, which still retains its name (Silwan), is situated near the opening of the valley of Tyropœon. See Bible Dict.

Ver. 8. **The neighbors therefore, and they who beheld him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?** The fact that he was a beggar has not been mentioned before. Stress is laid on it here rather than on his blindness, because it was from his frequenting the spot for the purpose of begging that he had become well known.

Ver. 9. **Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he.** The object of this verse and the last is to show how notorious the cure became, and how firmly the fact had been established.

Ver. 10. **They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened?** It does not appear that this was more than a single inquiry. As yet no element of malice against Jesus is introduced.

### *Jesus the Light separating between the light and the darkness,* chap. 9: 13–10: 21.

CONTENTS. The blind man restored to sight, is brought before the Pharisees with the view of instituting proceedings against Jesus, who, by the healing on the Sabbath, had violated the sanctity of the day of rest. But the process proves a signal failure, issuing as it does in the rescuing of the man from the Pharisaic yoke, and in a solemn rebuke administered by Jesus to those who had placed him at their bar. In this

14 was blind. Now it was the sabbath on the day when
15 Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again
therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put
clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.
16 Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is
not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath.

rebuke He points out the blindness and faithlessness of the guides of Israel, and explains the nature of that work which He, the Good Shepherd, had to perform in saving His own from shepherds who had betrayed their trust, and in gathering them out of every fold into His own flock. The effect of the discourse is again to bring about a division among the hearers. The subordinate parts of the section are—(1) 9: 13-34; (2) 9: 35-41; (3) 10: 1-18; (4) 10: 19-21.

Ver. 13. **They bring to the Pharisees him that once was blind.** They bring him to the Pharisees as the special guardians of the religious institutions of Israel. It is not at all likely that the man was brought before any formal court or assembly, but only before leading men amongst the Pharisees, who would at all times be ready to examine into such a charge as is implied in the next clause. The less formal and judicial their action was, the better does it illustrate the conflict of Jesus with the *spirit* of Judaism.

Ver. 14. **Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.** It is very interesting to compare this verse with the similar words in chap. 5: 10. The only offence expressly mentioned there was the carrying of the bed, though there is no doubt that the charge against Jesus related not to this only but also to the performance of the cure (chap. 7: 22). Here the two counts of the accusation are distinctly presented in their separation from each other,—(1) Jesus had made the clay; (2) He had opened the man's eyes. Another verse of the fifth chapter is likewise necessarily recalled to mind: speaking of the charge of laboring on the Sabbath, Jesus said (ver. 17), 'My Father worketh until now: I also work.' So here in reference to the same day He says, 'We must work the works of Him that sent me.'

Ver. 15. **Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight; and he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.** To his neighbors and acquaintances his answer had been fuller and more circumstantial: to the Pharisees, whom He knew to be the enemies of Jesus, he says as little as he may, and does not even mention his benefactor's name.

Ver. 16. The man's answer had been short and simple, but it had substantiated the two charges (see ver. 14) that had been brought. The testimony produced the effect which usually followed whenever Jesus manifested Himself,—some were attracted, some repelled. Go-

But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do
such signs? And there was a division among them.
17 They say therefore unto the blind man again, What
sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes?
18 And he said, He is a prophet. The Jews therefore
did not believe concerning him, that he had been
blind, and had received his sight, until they called
19 the parents of him that had received his sight, and
asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say

det remarks here, with peculiar force and propriety, 'The one party, taking as their starting-point the inviolability of the sabbatic law, deny to Jesus as a transgressor of this law any divine mission whatever; and from this logically follows the denial of the miracle. The others, setting out from the fact of the miracle, infer the holy character of Jesus, and implicitly deny the breaking of the sabbath. The choice of premiss depends in this case, as in all cases, upon the moral freedom; it is at this point of departure that the friends of light and the friends of darkness separate; the rest is simply a matter of logic.'

Ver. 17. **They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, because he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.** The fact is admitted, perhaps honestly, for it will be observed that, when we come to the next verse, we have a new set of questioners, and not simply persons who, having made a concession in the words before us, immediately withdraw it. The word 'thou' is emphatic: unable to decide the matter themselves, they seek to draw from the blind man some statement which may enable them more effectually to condemn Jesus. But his answer only deals an unexpected blow.

Ver. 18. **The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.** The change from 'the Pharisees' to 'the Jews' is very striking, and must have special significance. The Pharisees were united in zeal for the law and in watchfulness over the rites and usages of Israel, but not in hostility to Jesus; we have just seen that the testimony regarding the miracle has divided them into two camps. It is of a hostile body only that the Evangelist is speaking in this verse. But there is probably another reason for the change of expression. 'The Jews' is not with John a designation of all the enemies of Jesus; it denotes the representatives of Jewish thought and action,—the leaders of the people, who alas! were leaders in the persecution of our Lord. The use of the word here, then, leads us to the thought that the dispute had passed into a different stage. So serious had the case become that the rulers themselves engaged in it: more than this,—we have now done with inquiry in any true sense, and persecution has taken its place.

20 was born blind? how then doth he now see? His
parents answered and said, We know that this is our
21 son, and that he was born blind: but how he now
seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we
know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for
22 himself. These things said his parents, because they
feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already,
that if any man should confess him *to be* Christ, he
23 should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said
24 his parents; He is of age; ask him. So they called
a second time the man that was blind, and said unto
him, Give glory to God: we know that this man

Ver. 19. **And asked them saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?** In the hope that they may discover some flaw in the man's words, through which they may accuse him of complicity with Jesus, and, by thus destroying the idea of a miracle, may become free to deal with Jesus as a transgressor of the law, they question the parents of the man.

Ver. 20. **His parents therefore answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.** In seeking for that which might invalidate the 'sign,' the enemies of Jesus have but obtained new testimony to its reality.

Ver. 21. **But how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself; he is of age; he shall speak for himself.** The anxious care of the parents to keep clear of all testimony to Jesus is strikingly shown by the emphasis thrown on 'himself' as they refer the questioners to their son.

Vers. 22, 23. There were (at all events at a later period) various degrees of excommunication; but in any form it was a punishment of great severity, as the terror of the parents shows. The effect of the mildest grade was to render the culprit a heathen and no longer an Israelite during thirty days, depriving him of all intercourse with his family as well as of all privileges of worship. The growing alarm and hatred of the Jews are clearly shown by this compact. We are not to think of a decree of the Sanhedrin, or of any judicial act whatever, but of a private resolution taken by the Jews amongst themselves. The slight change of translation in the words 'put away from the synagogue' is intended to mark the fact that the expression used here is different from that which we find in vers. 34, 35.

Ver. 24. **They called therefore a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner.** In this second hearing the aim of the Jews is to overawe the man, and then force from him a con-

25 is a sinner. He therefore answered, Whether he be
a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that,
26 whereas I was blind, now I see. They said there-
fore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened
27 he thine eyes? He answered them, I told you even
now, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear
28 it again? would ye also become his disciples? And

fession that there had been some deception or mistake. This appears first in their words, 'Give glory to God' (see Josh. 7: 19),—a formula used when a criminal who was thought to be concealing the truth was urged to make a full confession. Remembering that the eye of God was upon him, let him give honor to God by speaking truth. Another significant point is the emphasis laid on '*we* know;' the authorities to whom he has been wont to yield implicit respect and deference in all religious matters, possessed of deeper insight and wider knowledge than himself. (do not *think* merely, but) *know* that Jesus is a breaker of the law, and therefore cannot have wrought a miracle.

Ver. 25. **He therefore answered, Whether he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see,** His simplicity leaves them no real excuse for condemning: by his steadfast adherence to the one testimony which he alone was competent to render, he most effectually brings condemnation on his judges, who, had they been sincere, would first have sought certain knowledge of the fact.

Ver. 26. **They said therefore to him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?** Every attempt to overthrow the *fact* has failed: possibly renewed inquiry as to the *mode* of cure may disclose something that may be used against Jesus. But the man has now perceived their design: they are not seeking the truth, and he will be the tool of no such judges as they are proving themselves to be.

Ver. 27. **He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?** The words 'ye did not hear' mean that they had not believed what they heard. The last clause is a little ambiguous in English. The meaning is Do ye also desire, to become His disciples? 'Ye also,' *may* mean 'ye as well as others;' but it most naturally signifies 'as well as *myself*,' the blind beggar. The obstinate enmity of the Jews impels him to avow his own discipleship.

Ver. 28. **And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.** Whether the man distinctly intended such reference to himself or not, it is thus that they understood his words: and this moves them contemptuously to contrast 'that man' with their greatest prophet, Moses.

they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple:
29 but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God
hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we
30 know not whence he is. The man answered and said
unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know
not whence he is, and *yet* he opened mine eyes.
31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any
man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he
32 heareth. Since the world began it was never heard
that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind.
33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.
34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And
they cast him out.

Ver. 29. **We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this man we know not from whence he is.** In holding by the law of Moses. then, they are safe, and are assured that they are doing the will of God. If *they* do not know the origin of 'this man,' he can be worthy of no regard; certainly he cannot be from God!

Vers.30–33. Herein lies the very marvel—that even *ye*, (1) knowing that no man ever receives power to do any miracle unless he be a worshipper of God and one that does His will; and (2) having proof that this man has done a miracle—yes, and such a miracle as has never before been wrought—will not see the conclusion that must follow, viz., that this man does the will of God; that he is no sinner, but comes from God (see the note on ver. 16). The man has assumed the office of a teacher, and has so taught that they have no counter argument to offer; 'the wise are taken in their own craftiness' (Job 5: 13).

Ver. 34. **They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they put him out.** The original is very graphic: In sins wast *thou* born, and *thou*, dost thou teach us? There is probably a distinct reference to the belief which is expressed in ver. 2; the fact that in their passion they are thus acknowledging the reality of the miracle is no argument against such a reference: the man's whole condition, as evinced by his spirit and his words, bears yet stronger testimony than his blindness, and shows that he was *altogether* born in sins. The last clause probably refers to ejection from the place in which the inquiry was held; but the next verse seems to prove that excommunication followed this. Cast out by the rulers from their place of meeting, he was cast out from all intercourse with them, and from

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on [1] the Son of God?
36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I
37 may believe on him? Jesus said unto him, Thou

[1] Many ancient authorities read *the Son of man.*

the community over which they ruled. Such was the only reasoning which could be opposed to the triumphant argument of the man born blind!

Ver. 35. **Jesus heard that they had put him out: and when he had found him, he said, Dost thou believe in the Son of man?** The man has lost this world; in that loss he shall gain the next. Jesus knows well the firmness and the wisdom which the man had shown in the presence of the Jews. But He knows also that the man had by implication avowed himself His disciple, and for this had been thrust out from the presence of the rulers. For this very reason Jesus would draw the bond of discipleship closer, and receive amongst His own him whom the Jews rejected. He seeks for the man, and, having found him, asks, Dost thou believe in the Son of man? The word 'thou' is emphatic, and brings into relief the contrast with those in whose presence he has lately been, who declared Jesus a sinner, and who had agreed that whoever confessed that Jesus was Christ should be excommunicated. The name 'Son of man' is equivalent to 'the Christ,' but gives prominence to the human nature of the Deliverer. This name therefore is altogether in harmony with the man's own words (vers. 31–33), in which he had spoken of Jesus as a worshipper of God and one who did God's will, one to whom God would hearken: to him Jesus, though 'from God' (ver. 33), was still 'a prophet' (ver. 17) and 'the man called Jesus' (ver. 11). Has he then true faith in the Messiah, in whose cause he has been suffering? Does he give himself to Him with that faith which involves complete union with Himself and His cause, undeterred by the fact that He appears as a man amongst men, yea and as one despised and rejected by men? The ordinary reading 'Son of God' is in all probability incorrect. It is easy to see how it might accidentally find its way into the text, being suggested partly by the usual practice of John (who frequently joins 'believe in' either with the Son of God or with a name of similar import), and partly by the act of worship related in ver. 38.

Ver. 36. **He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?** These are not words of a doubter, but of one who seeks to be led to a complete faith. In Jesus he has fullest confidence, and he waits only to hear His declaration respecting the 'Son of man;' as such Jesus has not yet manifested Himself to him.

Ver. 37. **Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaketh with thee is he.** The manifestation is

hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with
38 thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he wor-
39 shipped him. And Jesus said, For judgement came I
into this world, that they which see not may see; and
40 that they which see may become blind. Those of the

now given; both in word ('he that speaketh') and in the half-veiled, yet clear, reference to the work that had been wrought on him ('thou hast *seen* Him') in the gift of physical (and we may certainly add spiritual) eyesight.

Ver. 38. **And he said, I believe, Lord; and he worshipped him.** The simple and immediate answer shows how little remained to be done to make his faith complete. Not with bodily senses only, but in his heart, he has seen Jesus; he has heard His word; he believes and worships the Son of man, the Messiah, his Lord. In this man, therefore, Jesus has manifested Himself as 'Light of the world' (ver. 5). But of this manifestation there are two opposite results; the Light will attract some out of the darkness; the Light will repel others into yet deeper darkness. The newly found disciple is an example of the one work, the hardened Jews of the other. Of these contrasted results Jesus Himself here speaks.

Ver. 39. **And Jesus said, For a judgment came I into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind.** The rendering 'a judgment' may serve to remind us of the fact that our Lord (here using a word which is not found elsewhere in the Gospel) does not speak of the act of judging, but of the result. He does not say that He came in order to judge, but that the necessary effect of His coming into this world—a world alienated from God—will be a judgment. Those that see not (the 'babes' of Matt. 11: 25) come to Him for sight: those that see (the 'wise and prudent'), who know the law and are satisfied with that knowledge, and who, having all the guidance which should have led them to Christ, do not come, 'become blind'—lose all light through losing Him. Knowledge which has priceless value for pointing the way to Christ becomes accursed if put in His place as an object of trust. It is possible that, as the word 'judge' seems elsewhere in this Gospel always to have the force of a condemning judgment, this sense should be preserved here also: in the one case, the judgment is passed on acknowledged blindness, for they themselves who come to the light pass a condemnation on the blindness of their past state; in the other, judgment is passed upon supposed (or rather upon misused) sight. Thus both classes have a part in the 'judgment:' the one by appropriating as just the judgment of Jesus on their blindness apart from Him; the other by deliberately shutting their eyes to the true light. The result of this wilful action is utter blindness—not merely a disuse of sight, but a destruction of the power of sight.

Ver. 40. **Those of the Pharisees who were with him**

Pharisees which were with him heard these things,
41 and said unto him, Are we also blind? Jesus said
unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin:
but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth.
10: 1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth
not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth
up some other way, the same is a thief and a

**heard these things.** The whole cast of the language here used shows that those who speak are not representatives of the Pharisees as a body, or of the Pharisaic spirit in its worst characteristics. But lately there has been a division of feeling among the Pharisees in regard to Jesus (ver. 16). Some who were then impressed by His signs may have already become disciples; others may have remained in a state of uncertainty, impressed, but not convinced—not brought to the point of 'leaving all' their possessions of 'wisdom and prudence,' and following Him. It may be that those spoken of here were of such a description. No one, probably, who duly apprehends the difference in the usage of John between 'the Pharisees' and 'the Jews,' will think that necessarily these words were uttered in derision, or that these men were 'with Him' as enemies and spies.—**And said unto him, Are we blind also?** There had been an apparent difficulty in the words of Jesus. He spoke of two classes, distinguished in their character as not seeing and seeing; in their future lot, as receiving sight and becoming blind. The future lot is the result of the coming of Jesus into this world. It is very clear that He means that those who see not (like the despised blind man who has just been 'put out') will come to Him and obtain sight from Him. But what of the Pharisees, whom He invites to come? Does He class them also among those who 'see not'? Surely (they think) this cannot be His meaning. And yet, if not, Pharisees are excluded from all hope of blessing, for His words speak of but two classes.

Ver. 41. **Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would not have sin: but now ye say, We see; your sin abideth.** If ye were really blind, unable to open your eyes to, and indeed unconscious of, the existence of the light now shining round you, the sin of rejection of the light would not lie at your door. But it is not so. They are their own judges. They themselves say: We see; and yet they come not to Him. Their sin abideth; they are guilty of that sin, and so long as they refuse to come to Him, the sin must abide. So at the close of chap. 3 we read: 'He that disobeyeth the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him.'

Chap. 10, vers. 1, 2. **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up from some other quarter, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is a**

2 robber. But he that entereth in by the door is
3 [1]the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter

[1] Or, *a shepherd.*

**shepherd of the sheep.** The opening words are of themselves sufficient to show that this chapter must be very closely joined to that which precedes, for nowhere in this Gospel do we find a new discourse introduced by 'Verily, verily, I say unto you.' The thought of the Jews, who with their authoritative dictum, 'We know' (9: 24, 29) sought to hinder men of 'the multitude' from coming to Christ, underlies the whole parable, and forms the chief link binding the chapters together. In the last verses of chap. 9 the action of the unbelieving rulers is contemplated in its bearing upon themselves; here in its bearing upon those of whom the Jews were the recognised leaders. The figure used is taken from the very heart of the Old Testament Dispensation. Again and again do the prophets utter language of scathing indignation against unfaithful shepherds who 'feed themselves and not their flocks;' and more frequently still is the tender care of the good shepherd portrayed. The Messiah Himself is represented under this character in several prophetic passages: two chapters especially, Ezek. 34 and Zech. 11 (in each of which the contrasted types of shepherd are represented and the Messiah brought definitely into view), must be kept before us as we follow the course of this parable. The 'fold' of the sheep was a large open space enclosed by a paling or by walls of no great height: ingress or egress was given only by a door kept by a porter, who is not to be confounded with the shepherd for the protection of whose flocks the fold was used. All other points the narrative itself will bring out. In the first few verses the language is altogether *general.* A comparison is drawn between all shepherds of the flock and false and treacherous intruders into the fold. The application which makes *to Himself* of two of the figures in these opening verses does not yet come before the mind. The sheep are safe in the fold: there the narrative commences. We do not read how or by whom or whence they were brought into that fold for protection amidst the dangers of the night. In the morning the shepherds will come to lead forth their flocks, and having an acknowledged right of entrance will go in at the door. Should any one bent on entering the fold not come to the door, but climb over the fence and thus get in 'some other way' (literally, from some other quarter), his aim is evil,—he wishes to get possession of sheep or of a flock to which he has no right,—he is therefore a thief and a robber, a man determined either by craft or by violence to win spoil for himself. 'Entering by the door,' then, is the first mark by which a rightful shepherd is distinguished from a man of selfish and treacherous ends.

Ver. 3. **To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.** This verse gives other marks which indi-

openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before

cate a true shepherd. The keeper of the gate recognises him and gives him entrance. The sheep in the enclosure show at once that they are familiar with his voice. The sheep of his own particular flock he knows by name, and he calls them one by one. He has come in for their benefit and not his own, to lead them forth to pasturage. To none of these indications does he answer who is an intruder and no shepherd. What travellers tell us of the relation of an Eastern shepherd to his flock shows how true to nature was the language of these verses. It is by his voice that the shepherd is rocognised: he calls and the sheep come around him. In every flock there are some to whom he has given particular names, and who are wont to keep near him; every one of these knows his own name and comes to the shepherd when that name is called. In this last feature the language of the parable may go beyond common experience. Such a shepherd as our Lord describes knows and calls *every one* of his sheep by name. It is sometimes, indeed, maintained that no distinction ought to be made between 'the sheep' of the first clause and 'His own sheep' in the clause that follows. But this is surely a mistake, resulting from the premature application of these words to Him who is 'the Good Shepherd.' He no doubt knows by name every sheep of every flock: as yet, however, we have before us not *the* Shepherd but every one who is *a* shepherd of the sheep. There is some difficulty in determining who is meant by the 'porter' of this verse. Many explanations have been given, but there are only two that seem really to agree with the conditions of the context. The keeper of the door recognises any rightful shepherd, and especially the True Shepherd (ver. 11), but closes the way to self-seekers,—and this during all that time of waiting of which we have yet to speak. He cannot, therefore, be either Moses or John the Baptist; the thought of *Divine* care is necessary. We must thus think either of Christ Himself or of the Father or of the Holy Spirit. To refer the term, however, to the first of these would be to confuse the parable: it must belong to one of the two latter,—the Father, or the Holy Spirit who gave and watched over the promises, who called and qualified the prophets of Israel. Perhaps ver. 15, in which Jesus speaks of the Father's recognition of Himself, makes the first of these two the more probable. The tenor of chap. 6 also, in which there is repeated mention of the Father's work in relation to the work of Jesus, confirms this view; and a further confirmation may be found in the parable of chap. 15, in which Jesus represents Himself as the vine and His Father as the husbandman.

Ver. 4. **When he hath put out all his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.** The first words take up the thought contained in the words that immediately precede ('and leadeth them out'), but express it

them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his
5 voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will
flee from him: for they know not the voice of stran-
6 gers. This [1]parable spake Jesus unto them: but
they understood not what things they were which
he spake unto them.

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[1] Or, *proverb.*

with greater force. The shepherd leads forth *all* his own sheep,—not one is left behind. But the change from *leading out* to *putting out* is remarkable. In the figure it may refer to the solicitude of the shepherd to remove every sheep under his care from the fold in which it is not well that any should longer remain: some may be slow in following his lead, but he sees that none shall be overlooked. The real significance of this word, however, is connected with the interpretation of the parable (see below): for we cannot doubt that our Lord designedly uses here that very word which was employed to denote expulsion from the synagogue, and which has already met us in two consecutive verses of the previous chapter (34, 35), when the treatment received from the Jews by the man born blind is described. In this verse again we find complete faithfulness of description. To this day the Eastern shepherd goes before his flock, leading, not driving the sheep, and keeping them near him through their recognition of his voice.

Ver. 5. **But a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.** The 'stranger' is not one to whom the porter has opened (for the voice of every one who is thus admitted is familiar to all the sheep); he must therefore have entered by some other way, and he is in the fold as 'a thief and a robber.' No mark of a true shepherd is found in him. He has not entered by the door, and he has not been recognised by the keeper of the door; the sheep do not know his voice; he cannot call them by their names; his object is not their good, but his own spoil and gain. Lead a flock forth he cannot; the sheep flee from him.

Ver. 6. **This parable said Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.** The word here used is not that which occurs so frequently in the other Gospels in the sense of *parable.* It is found but four times in the New Testament—in 2 Pet. 2: 22, and in three verses of this Gospel (here and chap. 16: 25, 29). In 2 Pet. 2: 22 the word has its ordinary signification 'proverb:' in chap. 16: 29 it is opposed to speaking in the way the *most direct*—the *highest and best* for the attainment of the speaker's end (comp. on 16: 25). The derivation of the word suggests that the primary meaning was *a saying beside* or *out of the common way* which had not the direct plain bearing of an ordi-

7 Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

nary saying, but either was intended to have many applications (as a *proverb*), or was in some degree circuitous in the method by which it effected its purpose,—enigmatical or difficult. In this latter sense John seems to use the word, which does not therefore differ essentially from the 'parable,' as that word is used by the other Evangelists (see Matt. 13: 11-15). It seems certain that had any one of them related the comparison of this chapter he would have employed the more familiar name. The Septuagint uses the two words with little difference of sense.

Ver. 7. **Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.** The formula which introduced the parable (ver. 1) now brings in the interpretation. This interpretation is given in two parts,—or, as perhaps we ought rather to say, two distinct applications of the parable are given: the two most important points in the figure are taken in succession, and in each aspect the parable finds its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus. But as the formula which introduces this verse is not repeated in ver. 11, it is more correct to divide vers. 1-18 into two parts (1-6, 7-18—the latter being subdivided at ver. 11) than into three. First, Jesus declares Himself to be the 'door of the sheep,'—that is, not the door by which the sheep *enter into* the fold, but the door through which they will *leave* the fold at the call of the Shepherd, and (though this is not particularly specified until ver. 9) through which a shepherd enters to his sheep. The whole description of vers. 1-5 must be interpreted in harmony with this word of Jesus. If He is the Door, what is the fold?—who are the sheep? To answer these questions we must look forward to a later verse (ver. 16): 'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must lead, and they shall hear my voice, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.' That Jesus here speaks of the heathen world few will doubt; and if so, it is very clear that in ver. 1 the Jewish Church is intended by 'the fold of the sheep.' Not that all who are found within the pale of Judaism belong to 'the sheep' of which Jesus speaks. The sheep are those who hear a true shepherd's voice; and we may so far forestall ver. 11 as to say that none are included under this designation who refuse to hear the voice of Jesus Himself. 'The sheep' are therefore those who in other passages are described as 'of God' (see chap. 8: 47), and 'of the truth,' (chap. 18: 37), and the 'fold' is the Jewish Church in so far as that Church has sheltered these until the fulness of time has come. Then, and not till then, shall the sheep be led out of the fold into the free open pastures: then, too, the 'other sheep' will be brought, and there shall be, not two flocks but one, under one Shepherd. It will be seen that in no part of this parable are the sheep said to return to the fold; the shepherds only are spoken of as entering in, and that for the purpose of leading *out* their flocks. In saying, 'I am the door of the sheep,' therefore, Jesus says in effect —(1) that through Him alone has any true guardian and guide of the sheep entered into the fold; (2) that through Him alone will the sheep within the 'fold' be led out into the open pastures. The latter thought is easily understood; it presents the same promise of the gladness and freedom and life of Messianic times as was set forth by the symbols of the feast of Tabernacles in the seventh and eighth chapters. Then the figures were the pouring out of water and the lighting of the golden lamps: the figure now is very different, but (as we have seen) equally familiar in Old Testament prophecy. Not until Messiah shall come will the night of patient waiting cease, and the fold be seen to have been only a temporary shelter, not a lasting home. The application of the words before us to the shepherds is more difficult; for when we consider how this chapter is connected with the last, it is plain that Jesus adverts to the presence within the fold of some who are not true shepherds. They have climbed up from some other quarter, and are in the fold to gratify their own selfishness and greed, not to benefit the flock. How then can it be said of them that they did not enter through the Door—*i. e.*, through our Lord Himself? In answering this question it seems plain that we have here a saying akin to that of chap. 8: 56, or 12: 41, or to that of Heb. 11: 26, in which Moses is said to have esteemed 'the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.' The leading characteristic of preceding ages had been that they were a time of preparation for the Christ, that during them the promise and hope of the Christ had stood in the place of His personal presence. The object of every ruler in the Jewish Church, and of every teacher of the Jewish people, should have been to point forward to the coming of the Messiah; and each should have used all his power and influence, not for himself, but to prepare for the event in which the Jewish Church was to culminate and (in an important sense) come to an end, giving place to the Church Universal. The rulers brought before us in the last chapter had done the reverse; in no true sense had they prepared for the Christ: and when the Christ appeared, so far from receiving Him, they had combined together to put away from the Church in which they bore rule every one who acknowledged that Jesus was He. Hence, accordingly, the strong language of ver. 1. These teachers had 'climbed up from another quarter,' instead of entering by the Door. They had been marked by a spirit of self-exaltation, of earthly Satanic pride; they had appeared as the enemies of God, had refused to submit themselves to His plans, had sought not His glory but their own; their aims had been thoroughly selfish, devilish; they were of their father the devil (8: 44). Thus, also, we see that the term 'a thief and a robber,' applied to such teachers in ver. 1, is not too strong, for they had perverted the whole object of the theocracy; they had made that an end which was only designed to be a means, and had done this as men who had blinded themselves to the true light, and were using the flock of God as instruments for their own aggrandisement. They were in the fold, but they had not entered throught the door.

8 All that came before me* are thieves and robbers:
9 but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door:

* "before me" add marg. Some ancient authorities omit *before me.*—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 8. **All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.** In the similitude of the door, Jesus had declared that it was through Him alone that the flocks could come out of the Jewish fold into the pastures into which they had longed to enter; and this was a truth not depending only upon His proclamation of it, but lying in the very essence of the Old Testament dispensation. The prophecies had fixed the thoughts of all true Israelites on 'Him that cometh,' and had shown them that until His coming their hopes could not be fulfilled. But some had forgotten this, and had falsely claimed the place that belonged to Jesus, each deceiver pretending that he himself was the medium through which God's people were to be led to the satisfaction of their hopes. But those who trusted in God and waited patiently for Him were kept by Him from these deceivers: 'the sheep did not hear them.'—When, setting aside the thought of all true prophets, we ask who they are to whom this description applies, we naturally think, in the first instance, of false Messiahs, of whom many appeared in Jewish history. It may be said that we have no record of a claim to Messiahship earlier than the time when these words were spoken. This answer contains too positive an assertion. There is reason for believing that Judas of Galilee (mentioned in Acts 5: 37) was regarded by some as the Christ; and Gamaliel's words respecting Theudas (Acts 5: 36) may very possibly cover a similar assumption. The Gospels reveal a state of Messianic hope out of which such deception might easily arise. That popular insurrections were continually occurring is a notorious fact; and if Josephus, our chief authority for the history of this period, fails to give us a careful account of the religious hopes that were fostered by the leaders of revolt, his character and aims as a historian are a sufficient explanation of his silence. But whether the thought of false Messiahs is admissible or not, the meaning of the words must extend much farther, and must embrace all who had sought to turn the people from waiting for the promise which God had given, or had substituted other principles of national life for the hope of the Messiah. Such had long been the practical effect of the rule and teaching of Pharisees and Sadducees. These men had sat in the seat of Moses to make void the law and to extinguish the promise by their vain traditions, and for their selfish ends; and they are certainly, perhaps mainly, thought of here.

Ver. 9. **I am the door: by me if any one have entered in, he shall be saved, and shall enter in, and shall go out and find pasture.** From the thought of the 'thieves and robbers,' Jesus turns to that of 'a shepherd of the sheep.' And as entering by the door has been mentioned (ver. 1) as the first mark of a true shepherd, He emphatically repeats His former saying, 'I am the door.' In ver.

by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and
10 shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. The

7, however, as ver. 8 shows, it is of the release of the flock from the fold that we must chiefly think (and therefore the words 'of the sheep' were naturally added). The repetition here introduces the other application of the thought. Whoever has entered through this Door (Christ) shall be saved, and shall enter in (to the fold), and shall go out and find pasture (for the flock over which he is placed in charge). The repetition of 'enter,' it will be seen, involves no tautology: first, the shepherd passes through the door, then goes into the heart of the enclosure to call to him his sheep. He goes in for the purpose of coming out to find pasturage for the flock that follows him from the fold. The chief difficulty lies in the interpretation of the words: 'he shall be saved.' The sudden introduction of this thought in the very midst of figurative language most consistently preserved (*the door, enter in, go out and find pasture*) at first appears strange. But the very place which the words hold supplies a key to their interpretation. We cannot content ourselves with saying that the whole parable is instinct with the thought of salvation in its general sense, and that what is present in every part may surely be expressed in one. It is true that in our Lord's parables we sometimes find a rapid transition from the sign to the thing signified; but such an intermixture of fact and figure as (on that supposition) is found here, we meet with nowhere else. Whatever difficulty may arise, the words must connect themselves with the imagery of the parable. The chapters of Ezekiel and Zechariah, referred to in the note on ver. 1, show at once how this is possible. We have before seen (see chap. 3: 3; 7: 39; 8: 33, etc.) how suddenly our Lord sometimes removes His hearers into a familiar region of Old Testament history or prophecy. To the teachers of the law, who were the hearers of most of the discourses related by John, the letter of the Old Testament was well known; and, moreover, it is very probable that in the discourses as delivered other words may have been added, not necessary to the completeness of the thought, but helpful to the understanding of the hearers. One of the connecting links between this chapter and the last is the evil wrought by unworthy and false shepherds; in this word suddenly introduced in the portraiture of a true shepherd, we have vividly brought before us all that the prophets had said of the fate of the unworthy. Those shepherds who had no pity on the flock, but said: 'Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich,' the soul of the prophet 'loathed,' and he gave them to destruction (Zech. 11: 5, 8, 17). From all such penalty of unfaithfulness shall the true shepherd be 'saved.' That He whose love to His flock assigns this punishment to the unworthy will reward the faithful, may not be expressed in the figure; but in the interpretation it holds the chief place: to such a shepherd of souls will Jesus give salvation.

Ver. 10. **The thief cometh not but that he may steal and**

thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and
destroy: I came that they may have life, and may
11 [1]have *it* abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the

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[1] Or, *have abundance.*

**kill, and destroy.** This verse forms a link of connection between ver. 9 and ver. 11, presenting first the contrast between a true shepherd and 'the thief,' and then preparing the way for the highest contrast of all, that between the thief and the Good Shepherd. The rightful Shepherd has entered (ver. 9), that He may lead out His flock to the pastures; the thief cometh only to steal and kill, feeding himself, and not the flock, even seeking its destruction.—**I came that they may have life, and that they may have abundance.** To this point the figure contained in 'I am the door' has been more or less clearly preserved, for the shepherd has, and the thief has not, entered the fold by the door. The language now before us does not really depart from this conception (for in opposition to those who '*came* before' Him professing to be 'the door of the sheep,' Jesus here says, 'I *came*'), although it agrees still better with the thought of ver. 11. In fact the words 'I came' stand in double contrast—with the words of ver. 8, and with the first words of this verse 'the thief cometh.' By whatever figure Jesus is represented, the object of His appearing is the same, that His sheep may live. The life and abundance are the reality of which the pasturage (ver. 9) has been the symbol. As in chap. 7, the blessings of Messiah's kingdom are represented by abundant streams of living water, so here the regions into which Jesus is leading His flock are regions of life and of abundance. To His people He gives eternal life; there shall be no want to them for maintaining their life in all its freedom and joy; their 'cup runneth over.'

Ver. 11. **I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.** The aspect of the preamble here changes: in the following verses, until the 16th, there is no mention of the fold or of the door, but of the shepherd only and his relation to the flock. The word rendered 'good' occurs but seldom in this Gospel; it differs from the word ordinarily so translated (which, however, John uses still less frequently), in that it is never used to express the idea of kindness, but always signifies what is beautiful, noble, excellent of its kind. Both words may be used to denote moral excellence, and with but slight difference of meaning. Here then the epithet has no reference to kindness, but to excellence as a Shepherd. Is there a shepherd whose work is not only faithful, but all fair, without spot or defect, such a Shepherd of the flock is the Lord Jesus. The highest point which the Shepherd's faithfulness can reach is His laying down His life for the sheep: when the wolf assaults the flock, the Good Shepherd repels Him, although He die in the attempt. Strictly taken, these words are general, and may be

good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.
12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose
own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming,
and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf
13 snatcheth them, and scattereth *them: he fleeth* be-
cause he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own,

said of every noble shepherd; but, connected with the first clause, they in effect declare what is done by Jesus Himself. Our Lord's hearers at the time would understand no more than this, that at the peril of His life He would defend His flock; but it is impossible to read chap. 11: 51 without seeing in the words a reference to the truth declared in chap. 3: 14, 15; 12: 32—the atoning death of the Redeemer, which brings life to the world.

Vers. 12, 13. **He that is an hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth (and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth), because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep.** A true shepherd will purchase the life of his sheep by the sacrifice of his own life. The man who has taken the work of a shepherd for hire, who is only a hireling and careth not for the sheep, abandons them as soon as danger approaches, and gains his own life at the cost of the life of his sheep. Since the sheep are not to him as 'his own,' the very name of shepherd is denied him. If 'the thief' who comes under the guise of shepherd stands for all who force themselves into the place of rulers and guides, for the sake of private gain, 'the hireling' seems to represent those who held such place by lawful right, but when faithfulness was needed most deserted duty through fear. Godet points to chap. 12: 42 as exemplifying the description here given. The lawful rulers dare not avow their own convictions and thus guard the people who trust in them; the Pharisaic spirit is too strong for them; they save themselves by silence and give up those for whom they should care to the persecution of the enemy. Some of these will yield to the foe and deny that Jesus is the Christ; many will be scattered. It is possible therefore that 'the wolf' may here represent this spirit of Judaism, but we should rather say that it is the enemy (Luke 10: 19) of God and man who is represented under the symbol of the natural foe of the sheep and of the Shepherd. Whatever agency may be used, the ultimate source of the murderous design is the spirit of evil, the Devil, he who was 'a murderer from the beginning.'

Vers. 14, 15. **I am the good shepherd, and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.** As the figure of ver. 7 was repeated in ver. 9, that

15 and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my
16 life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must [1]bring, and they shall hear my voice; and [2]they shall become

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[1] Or, *lead.*

[2] Or, *there shall be one flock.*

it might receive a new and blessed application. so here we have a repetition of the figure presented in the 11th verse. The repetition removes from view the unworthy: we are brought once more into the presence of Jesus and His own. First and last in these two verses stand the two clauses of the former verse, altered only in so far that what there was said of the Good Shepherd is here said of Jesus Himself ('*I* lay down'). Between these two clauses are placed two other sayings, the first suggested at once by the figure used, the second rising higher than any earlier words of the parable. Since Jesus is the good Shepherd, His sheep hear His voice and He calleth His own sheep by name (ver. 3): hence He says that He knows (recognises) His own sheep and His own know (recognise) Him. But once more (see chap. 8: 38) He places in parallelism His own relation to the Father and the relation of His own to Him. He looks on the sheep and sees at once that they are His: they see Him and hear His voice and know that He is their Shepherd. So the Father looks on Him and sees in Him the Good Shepherd whom He sent: He looks on the Father, and constantly recognises His presence as the Father with Him. There is wonderful beauty and elevation in the comparison; no saying of our Lord goes beyond this in unfolding the intimacy of communion between Himself and His people which it reveals and promises. They are His, as He is the Father's.

These two verses are remarkable for simplicity of structure. As in the simplest examples of Hebrew poetry, thought is attached to thought, one member is placed in parallelism with another. Yet, as in Hebrew poetry of which this reminds us, a *dependence* of thought upon thought, may be inferred, though it is not expressed. Thus we have seen that, if Jesus is the Good Shepherd, it must be true that He recognises His own sheep. So also (and it is to point out this that we call attention to the structure of the verse) the Father's recognition of Him closely connects itself with His laying down His life, as the Shepherd for the sheep. In this the Father sees the highest proof of His devotion to the work He has accepted: in the spirit of constant readiness for this crowning act of love He recognises the Father's constant presence and love (ver. 17). And, as the words of the verse bear witness to the Father's care for man (not less truly and powerfully because this meaning does not lie on the surface of the words), it is easy to see once more with what fitness we here read 'the Father,' and not simply 'My Father' (see chap. 8: 27, 38).

Ver. 16. **And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must lead, and they shall hear my voice.**

Not in the Jewish Church only was there a work of preparation for His coming: the light had been shining in the darkness (chap. 1: 5),—the light which enlighteneth every man (1: 9). Many in the Gentile world were waiting only to hear His voice: they will recognise their Shepherd, and He will know His own sheep. He regards them as His own even now ('other sheep *I have* '); they are not shunning the light and seeking darkness; He receives them now as His Father's gift to Him. It is not easy to answer a question which the words immediately suggest: Does our Lord speak of these 'other sheep' of the Gentile world as abiding in a *fold?* It might be so. We cannot see that there would be difficulty in regarding that dispensation of which we know so little, the dealings of the One Father with the heathen world (to which had been given no such revelation as the Jews possessed, but in which He had never left Himself without witness), as symbolized by a 'fold.' But there does seem to be an intentional avoidance of any word that would necessarily suggest this image here. No mention is made of 'entering in' to the place where these sheep abide, or of the door through which they pass. The word 'lead' is used again, but, whereas in ver. 3 we read that the Shepherd leadeth out His own sheep from the Jewish fold, here He says only 'them also I must *lead.*' We conclude therefore that it was not without design that Jesus said—not 'I have sheep of another fold,' but—'I have other sheep, not of this fold.' The language of chap. 11: 52 suggests rather that these 'other sheep' have been comparatively shelterless, not drawn together by any shepherd's care, but 'scattered abroad.' Their *past* has been altogether different from that of the devout Israelite; but the *future* of Jew and Gentile shall be the same. As in the case of Israel, so here the whole work of bringing liberty and life is accomplished by Jesus Himself: it is a work that He *must* do (comp. chap. 4: 34; 9: 4, etc.), for it is His Father's will. He seeks the scattered sheep; they come together to Him; He places Himself at the head of this other flock; His voice keeps them near to Him. Passing for a moment from the figure, we recognise once more how Jesus includes all the work of faith and discipleship in '*hearing Him*' (see chap. 8: 31, 40, 47): all that had been wanting to these heirs of a lower dispensation is supplied when they hear His voice.—**And they shall become one flock, one shepherd.** Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, One flock, One Shepherd (Ezek. 34: 23; 37: 22-24). As written by the prophet indeed the words have express reference to the reuniting of scattered and divided Israel; but as in countless other instances, the history of Israel is a parable of the history of the world. The apostolic comment on the verse is found in Ephesians, chap. 2. It is very unfortunate that in the Authorised Version the rendering 'one fold' should have found a place instead of 'one flock.' The whole thought of the parable is thrown into confusion by this error, which is the less excusable inasmuch as the word which actually does mean 'fold' (a word altogether dissimilar) occurs in the first part of the verse. Our first and greatest

17 one flock, one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father
love me, because I lay down my life, that I may
18 take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but
I lay it down of myself. I have [1]power to lay it
down, and I have [2]power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.

[1] Some ancient authorities read *took it away*. [2] Or, *right*.

translator, William Tyndale, rightly understood the words: the influence of the Vulgate and of Erasmus was in this case prejudicial, and led Coverdale (who in his own Bible of 1535 had followed Tyndale) to introduce the wrong translation into the Great Bible of 1539. We may well wonder that the Vulgate should contain so strange a mistake; the older Latin version was here correct, but was changed by Jerome. [The mistranslation favors the false notion of the necessity of *one* visible organization out of which there can be no salvation. There may be many folds, and yet but one flock.—P. S.]

Ver. 17.—**Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.** In ver. 15 we have read of the Father's recognition of the Good Shepherd, who gives the highest proof of His devotion to the shepherd's work and possession of the shepherd's character in laying down His life for the sheep. These verses take up and expand that thought, speaking not of recognition only but of love. But it is with ver. 16 that ver. 17 is immediately connected. 'I must' had expressed complete union with His Father's will: the prophecy that follows brought into view the full and certain accomplishment of the Father's purpose, On this account, because of this union of will and this devotion to His purpose, 'the Father,' (note once more how perfect is the fitness of this name here) loveth Him,—namely, because He layeth down His life that He may take it again. The two parts of this statement must be closely joined together. The perfect conformity to the Father's will is shown not in laying down the life only, but also in taking it again. The duty of the Shepherd as set forth in vers. 15, 16, can only in this way be accomplished. He gives His life to purchase life for His sheep, but besides this He must continue to lead the flock of which He is the Only Shepherd. In the execution of His work, therefore, He could not give Himself to death without the purpose of taking His life again: He died that His own may ever live in His life.—But, if the Father's love can rest on the Son who is obedient even unto death, and unto life through death, it is essential that the obedience be entirely free. Hence the words of the next verse.

Ver. 18. **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** He lays down His life of Himself. He has the right to do this, and the right to take the life again.—**This com-**

19 There arose a division again among the Jews be-
20 cause of these words. And many of them said
He hath a [1]devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?
21 Others said, These are not the sayings of one pos-
sessed with a [1]devil. Can a [1]devil open the eyes of
the blind?

[1] Gr. *demon.*

**mandment I received of my Father.** By His Father's express commission He has this right of free decision. For the first time Jesus here speaks of the 'commandment' which He has received, and the use of this term is in full harmony with the position He has assumed throughout the parable, the Shepherd of God's flock, the Servant of Jehovah. On the word 'love' (ver. 17) see note on chap. 5: 20: the word found in that verse is not used here, for the reason there explained. A question is often asked in relation to the words of these verses: if the teaching of Scripture is that the Father raised the Son from the dead, how can Jesus speak as He here does about His resumption of life? But, if the words 'this commandment' be interpreted as above, to refer to the Father's will that the death and resurrection should rest on the free choice of Jesus, the answer is plain: Jesus took His life again in voluntarily accepting the exercise of His Father's power. If we understand the 'commandment' to relate—not to the possession of right or power, but—to the actual death and resurrection, the answer is different, but not less easy: Jesus in rising from the dead freely obeys the Father's will,—the Father's will is still the ultimate source of the action of the Son.

Ver. 19. **There arose again a division among the Jews because of these words.** The effect related in chap. 7: 43; 9: 16, is again produced. This time however (as in chap. 8: 31) 'the Jews' themselves are divided. The preceding parable therefore must have been spoken in the hearing of many who were hostile to Jesus, as well as of Pharisees (chap. 9: 40) who may have been half convinced.

Vers. 20, 21. **And many of them said, He hath a demon, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the sayings of one that is possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?** In the other instances quoted above the division of feeling had been between 'some' and 'others:' here, where 'the Jews' are in question, *many* are driven by the words of Jesus to more bitter hostility, repeating and extending the charge of which we read in chap. 7: 20; 8: 48. But there are others whom the miracle related in chap. 9, had impressed, though at the time they did not stand up against the action of their party (chap. 9: 34) The object produced on them by the miracle which Jesus wrought is now deepened by His teaching: as in the case of Nicodemus the 'sign' prepared the way for the instruction of the 'words.'

## CHAPTER 10: 22–42.

### *Jesus at the Feast of the Dedication.—The Increasing Contrasts of Faith and Unbelief.*

22 [1]And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusa-

[1] Some ancient authorities read, *At that time was the feast.*

In the question asked we have the same association of teaching and miracle. A man possessed by a spirit of evil could not say such things as these: a demon (though he might be supposed able to cast out another demon) could not restore to the blind their sight. It is interesting to observe in these last words the tendency of the Evangelist to close a section with words that recall its opening, thus binding all the parts of a narrative into one whole.

### *Jesus at the Feast of the Dedication.—The Increasing Contrasts of Faith and Unbelief,* vers. 22–42.

CONTENTS.—The contest with the Jews is continued. The section strikingly illustrates the plan of the Gospel, (1) by taking up again that claim of Jesus to be the Son of God which had, more than anything else, provoked the opposition of His enemies; (2) by bringing into notice His return to Bethany beyond Jordan, where He had been first made manifest by the Baptist to Israel, and where confession is now made by 'many' that everything spoken of Him by the Baptist at His entrance upon His public ministry had proved true. We have here, therefore, the culminating point of the conflict, and the pause before the highest manifestation by Jesus of Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. The subordinate parts are—(1) 10: 22–39; (2) vers. 40–42.

Ver. 22. **There came to pass at that time the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem: it was winter.** With these words we enter on a new scene, where the Evangelist first sets before us the outward circumstances, expressing them, after his usual manner, by three clauses. Where and how the weeks intervening between the Feast of Tabernacles in chap. 7 and the feast now mentioned were spent, John does not inform us. Once more he shows clearly that his intention is not to give a continuous narrative; for, though he has clearly defined two points of time (the two festivals), he records in the interval events of but two or three days. The festival here spoken of was instituted by Judas Maccabæus, B.C. 165. For three years the sanctuary had been desolate, and on the altar of burnt-offering had been placed an altar for idol-worship. After the victory gained at Bethsura (or Bethzur), the first thought of Judas was to 'cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary' which had been profaned. The altar of burnt-offering was taken down, and a new altar built; and all Israel 'ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Cisleu, with mirth and gladness'

23 lem: it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the
24 temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came
round about him, and said unto him, How long dost
thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ,

(1 Macc. 4: 59). The date would correspond to a late day in our month of December. We do not find in the following verses any words of our Lord which directly relate to this festival; but those readers who have noted how carefully the Evangelist points to the idea of every Jewish feast as fulfilled in Jesus will not suppose that there is an exception here. Having heard the words of chap. 2: 19, he could not but associate his Lord with the temple; and a feast which commemorated the reconstruction of the temple must have had great significance in his eyes.

Ver. 23. **And Jesus walked in the temple-courts, in Solomon's porch.** The 'porch' which bore Solomon's name was a covered colonnade on the eastern side of the outer court of the temple. According to Josephus, this 'porch' was the work of Solomon; at all events, we may well believe that the massive foundations were laid by him, though the cloisters which he built were in ruins when Herod began his restoration of the temple.

Ver. 24. **The Jews therefore surrounded him, and said unto him, How long dost thou excite our soul? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.** The recurrence of the oft-repeated term 'the Jews' is a sufficient indication of the tone and design of the question asked. Taking advantage, perhaps, of the fact that Jesus was in the cloisters of the temple-courts, and not now in the midst of a listening 'multitude,' His enemies encompass Him, determined to gain from Him such an avowal of His Messiahship as shall enable them to carry out their designs against His life.—The expression which in the Authorized Version is rendered 'make us to doubt' has received various explanations. That adopted by us is perhaps, upon the whole, the most probable. Another, however, may be suggested by what is at least a curious coincidence, that the verb used by the Jews is the same as that used by our Lord for 'taketh' in the first clause of ver. 18, and the noun now rendered 'soul' is more probably 'life,' and is indeed so translated in ver. 17. Following these hints, we venture to ask whether the words may not mean: 'How long dost thou take away our life?' They will then be one of those unconscious prophecies, of those unconscious testimonies to the going on of something deeper than they were themselves aware of, which John delights to find on the lips of the opponents of Jesus. They were stirring up their enmity against Him to a pitch which was to lead them to take away His life; and by their words they confess that He is taking away theirs. It is not meant, in what has now been said, to assert that the Jews actually intended to express this, but only that John sees it in the language which they use. They meant only, How long

25 tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you,
and ye believe not: the works that I do in my
26 Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye
27 believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My
sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
28 follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and
they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch

dost thou excite us or keep us in suspense? Put an end to this by speaking plainly, or (more literally) by speaking out, telling all Thou hast to tell.

Ver. 25. **Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness concerning me.** A demand so made was never granted by Jesus. They had already received sufficient evidence, and to this He refers them. He again speaks of both word and deed. What He had said (see chap. 5: 19; 8: 36, 56, 58) had shown clearly who He is; what He had done had borne witness concerning Him (see chap. 5: 36). But both word and works had failed to lead them to belief in Him.

Ver. 26. **But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.** In chap. 8: 47 He had said that they heard not His words because they were not of God; the same thought is expressed here, but with a change of figure. There is no reference to an essential or necessary state, to any 'decree' through the operation of which they were incapable of faith. They have not the character, the disposition, of His sheep; through this moral defect (for which they are themselves responsible, see chap. 3: 19, etc.), they will not believe. This is brought out more fully in the next verse.

Vers. 27, 28. In these verses is given a description of the true sheep. The description is rhythmical, and rises to a climax. The first couplet expresses some property of the sheep, the second a corresponding attitude or action of the Shepherd; and each successive couplet takes us into a higher sphere of thought and blessing.

1. My sheep hear my voice,
   And I know them;
2. And they follow me,
   And I give unto them eternal life,
3. And they shall never perish,
   And no one shall pluck them out of my hand.

The couplets, as will be seen, express successively the mutual recognition of sheep and Shepherd (for this is the meaning conveyed by the word here rendered 'know'—see the note on vers. 14, 15); the *present* gift of eternal life to those who follow Jesus (see chap. 8: 12, etc.); the *lasting* safety of those who thus follow Him and abide with

29 them out of my hand. [1]My Father, which hath
give *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one
30 is able to snatch [2]*them* out of the Father's hand. I
31 and the Father are one. The Jews took up stones

[1] Some ancient authorities read *that which my Father hath given unto me.*
[2] Or, aught.

Him. The description presents a complete contrast to the action of 'the Jews,' who were not of His sheep (ver. 26); who, though He had so often manifested Himself to them by word and work, yet had never recognized His voice, but came to Him saying: 'If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' From this contrast arises the order of the clauses in these verses, an order different from that in ver. 14.

Vers. 29, 30. **My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.** The apparent object of these words is to establish more completely the safety of His sheep. But in answering this purpose they also answer a still higher end; they are a revelation of Jesus Himself. In effect they give a reply to the question of the Jews, but such a reply as only the heart prepared to listen to the truth will receive. Jesus has spoken of 'My sheep;' they are His by reason of His Father's gift. The Father who has given will maintain the gift: and He is greater than all who could seek to snatch away the sheep,—none can snatch aught out of the hand of the Father. The progress of the thought is perfectly simple, but the transition from 'my Father' to 'the Father' is full of meaning. The latter name is fitly used, since here the axiom of Divine Almightiness is expressed; the same name, moreover, is most appropriate in a passage which traces the development of God's purpose to make men His sons through His Son. Jesus has used the same words of Himself and of the Father; 'no one shall pluck them out of my hand,'—'no one can pluck out of the Father's hand. He might have left His hearers to draw the certain inference, but He will so far grant their request as to 'tell' this 'plainly;' 'I and the Father are one.' There is perhaps nothing in this saying that goes beyond the revelation of chap. 5; but its terseness and its simple force give it a new significance. Unity of action, purpose, power, may be what the context chiefly requires us to recognise as expressed in these words; but the impression which was made upon the Jews (ver. 31), the fuller attainment of ver. 38, the analogy of chap. 5 and of expressions (still more closely parallel) in chap. 17 forbid us to depart from the most ancient Christian exposition which sees in this saying of Jesus no less than a claim of unity of essence with the Father.

Ver. 31. **The Jews took up stones again to stone him.** Their view of the blasphemy of His words is given more fully in ver. 33. The word 'again' carries us back to chap. 8: 59, where a similar attempt is recorded, but in less definite language. There we see

32 again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many
good works have I showed you from the Father;
33 for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews
answered him, For a good work we stone thee not,
but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a
34 man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them,
Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

the Jews taking up, hastily snatching up, stones that lay near, to 'cast on Him:' here their resolve to inflict the penalty for blasphemy appears more distinctly in their attempt to 'stone Him.' The two words rendered 'take up' are also different, and it is possible that the Evangelist here presents the Jews as bearing up the stones on high, in the very act of preparing to bury Him beneath them. The climax ought not to pass unobserved.—They are arrested by His own words.

Ver. 32. **Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?** On the word 'good' see the note on ver. 11: every work He has shown them has borne the perfect stamp of a work noble and perfect in its kind, for He has shown it 'from the Father,' who sent Him and ever works with and in Him. He knew that they were enraged at His *word*, and yet He speaks here of His *works:* the works and the words are essentially one,—alike manifestations of Himself.

Ver. 33. **The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.** These words show conclusively how the saying of ver. 30 was understood by those who heard it: they perceive now who is meant by 'the Father' (comp. 8: 27), and see that to claim oneness with Him is to claim Deity. All recollection of 'good works' and indeed all evidence whatever they cast away, treating such a claim as incapable of support by any evidence.

Ver. 34. **Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?** The quotation is from Ps. 82, (the word 'law' being used, as in chap. 15: 25 and some other places, for the Old Testament scriptures generally), 'I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.' The psalm is a reproof of unrighteous judges. Its opening words bring before us God judging 'among the gods,'—that is, among the judges, for the sacred name is in other passages (Ex. 21: 6; 22: 8, and probably 22: 28) given to those who were to the people the representatives of God, and gave judgment in His name. In following verses of the psalm as far as ver. 7, it is supposed by some that God Himself is the Speaker (comp. Ps. 1). If so, the words 'Ye are gods' are here quoted as if spoken by God; and in the next verse 'he called' must be similarly

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of
God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),
36 say ye of him, whom the Father [1]sanctified and sent
into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said,
37 I am *the* Son of God? If I do not the works of my
38 Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though
ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may

[1] Or, *consecrated.*

explained. It seems more likely, however, that the rebuke of the judges' injustice is administered by the psalmist in his own person; and in ver. 35 the meaning will be that the law 'called,' or the speaker implied in the emphatic 'I,' viz. the psalmist writing under inspiration from God and expressing His mind. In any case the pronoun 'I' is strongly marked,—I myself, who utter the rebuke and had foretold the punishment, had borne witness to the dignity of the position of the judge.

Vers. 35, 36. If (1) the speaker in the psalm called men 'gods' because the word of God (the expression of God's will, which, as judges, they were bound to carry out) was given to them; and if (2) this passage of scripture cannot be broken, cannot be set aside, but must be taken as inspired by God, how can they accuse Jesus of blasphemy? To the judges the 'word of God came:' Jesus was sent into the world by the Father to declare His will, as Himself 'The Word.' The judges were commissioned by God for the work to which they proved unfaithful: He, consecrated by the Father to His work, had but fulfilled His trust when He declared Himself Son of God. If then the judge, as a partial and imperfect expression of God (if we may so speak) to the people received the name of 'god,' with infinitely higher right may Jesus call Himself Son of God. His claim of the name was in itself no foundation for their charge: their own law should have taught them this.

Ver. 37. **If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.** In the last verse 'the Father' was the Name of which Jesus spoke, thus bringing together in thought God who spoke in the psalm and His Father who sent Him into the world. Here, after the mention of 'the Son of God,' He says 'the works of '*My* Father.' If He does no such works they have no right to believe His word and acknowledge His claims. It is otherwise if He does them.

Ver. 38. If He does the works of His Father, then, even although they might be unwilling to accept His witness respecting Himself, the works bear a testimony they are bound to receive. Receiving this testimony and thus learning that the works of Jesus are the Father's works, men will know that He and the Father are one, the Father abiding in Him, and He in the Father. But this is not a truth learnt once for all. The words of Jesus are: that ye may 'know' (being

39 know and understand that the Father is in me, and
I in the Father. They sought again to take him:
and he went forth out of their hand.
40 And he went away again beyond Jordan into the
place where John was at the first baptizing; and
41 there he abode. And many came unto him; and
they said, John did indeed no sign: but all things

brought to conviction by the testimony of the works) and (from that point onwards continually) 'recognise' . . . Their eyes once opened, they will ever see in the works tokens of the Father's presence.

Ver. 39. **They sought again to seize him: and he went forth out of their hand.** 'Again' seems to point back to chap. 7, where the same word 'seize' is found three times (vers. 30, 32, 44). We cannot suppose that the Jews had laid aside their design of stoning Him in consequence of the words just spoken, for these words would either lead to faith or repel to greater enmity. For some reason not mentioned they now seek not to stone Him on the spot, but to seize Him and carry Him away. As in chap. 8: 59, 'He went forth' out of their hand, thus illustrating again His own words in ver. 18.

Ver. 40. The place in which John *at first* baptized was that mentioned in chap. 1: 28 (not in chap. 3: 22), viz. Bethany beyond the Jordan. But why does the Evangelist here make special mention of this fact? It would seem that we have another illustration of his tendency at the close of a period of the history to go back to the beginning of that period. He gathers together the whole ministry of Jesus up to this time under one point of view. With the next chapter we really enter on the final scene: in the raising of Lazarus the work of Jesus reaches its culminating-point; by that miracle His rejection and condemnation by the Jews is made certain. And as in a mountain ascent the traveler may pause before attempting the highest peak, and survey the long path by which he has ascended, so the Evangelist here pauses before relating the last struggle, and (by mentioning the association of the place and not the name of the place itself) leads his readers to survey with him all the period of the ministry of Him to whom John bore witness. Whatever Jesus had since done or said ratified the witness borne by the Baptist. Possibly it was because of John's testimony that Jesus sought this spot: near it may have lived many whose hearts had been prepared for His teaching.

Vers. 41, 42. How great the contrast between the scene presented here and those of the preceding chapters! He came to the Jews, but, in spite of works and word, they rejected Him: now in His retirement, many come unto Him, and many believe in Him. For Jesus this period of rest is a period not of peace only, but also of joy in successful toil. Another contrast implied is between Jesus and the Baptist 'who did no sign' but bare witness only. He being dead yet

42 whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.

## CHAPTER 11: 1–44.

### *The Raising of Lazarus.—Jesus the Resurrection and the Life.*

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany,

speaketh, in that his testimony is leading men to Jesus in the very place of his own ministry: and there also witness is borne to him, in the emphatic acknowledgment that all his words concerning Jesus had proved true. Nay, even beyond the experience of these believers we may see that this saying expresses truth, for in His most memorable discourses Jesus fulfills the words of the Baptist recorded in chap. 1 of this Gospel, 'He that cometh after me has become before me because He was before me' (1: 15, 27, 30).

*The Raising of Lazarus.—Jesus the Resurrection and the Life*, vers. 1–44.

CONTENTS.—The manifestation of Jesus by Himself is about to terminate so far at least as the world is concerned, and it does so in His revealing Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, the Conqueror of Death in the very height of its power. The raising of Lazarus illustrates this. The account as a whole divides itself into two subordinate parts—(1) vers. 1–16; (2) vers. 17–44.—[This chapter is the gospel of comfort at the open grave. The raising of Lazarus is the most stupendous of the quickening miracles of Jesus, the immediate cause of His death, and the foreshadowing of His resurrection. Spinoza said, if he could believe this, he would have no difficulty with all the other miracles, and would dash to pieces his pantheistic philosophy, and become a Christian. The false explanations (raising from a trance; a symbolic fiction; a pious fraud) are untenable, and explain nothing. The historic truth is abundantly attested by the simplicity, vivacity and circumstantiality of the narrative, the good sense and honesty of Lazarus and his sisters, and the divine character of Christ. The only serious difficulty is the silence of the other Evangelists; it has been explained by a delicate regard to the surviving family, or better by the fact that the first three Gospels describe only the Galilean ministry of Jesus till His solemn entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21). While John omits the raising of Jairus' daughter and the widow's son, which took place in Galilee.—P. S.]

Ver. 1. **Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus, of Bethany, from the village of Mary and her sister Martha.** The scene of the miracle to be related in this chapter is Bethany, *i. e.* 'House of Dates,' a village (now small and poor) about two miles south-east of Jerusalem over the southern shoulder of the Mount of Olives. [It was the peaceful refuge of Jesus from hostile Jerusalem in the events before the crucifixion.] Neither here nor in chap. 1: 44 is the use of the two prepositions 'of' and 'from' intended to point to two different

2 of the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And
it was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother
3 Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore sent unto
him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is
4 sick. But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness
is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the
5 Son of God may be glorified thereby. Now Jesus

places, one the present abode, the other the original home; but Bethany itself is 'the village of Mary and her sister Martha.' The circumstance referred to in ver. 2 probably accounts for the prior mention of Mary; for Martha appears to have been the elder sister (see Luke 10: 38). The name Lazarus is Hebrew (a shortened form of Eleazar), but with a Greek termination.—[Martha represents the active, outward, practical life, Mary the passive, inward, contemplative type. A similar difference distinguishes Peter and John among the apostles. Both are equally necessary in the Church.—P. S.]

Ver. 2. (**Now it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.**) These words seem intended to bring into view the closeness of the relation between Jesus and Mary. There are particulars in which this narrative closely resembles that of chap. 2: 1–11; as there we have the closest tie of kindred, so here we read of the most intimate friendship. But the one tie as well as the other must yield to the voice of God. The anointing was when John wrote well and widely known (see Matt. 26: 13); it is here specially mentioned in anticipation of chap. 12.

Ver. 3. The confidence of the sisters in the love and in the power of Jesus is shown by the absence of any request: the message is a tender and delicate expression of their need. With the description of Lazarus compare chap. 20: 2 (where the same verb for 'love,' is used), 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'

Ver. 4. The reply of Jesus is not represented as addressed to the messengers sent, or to the apostles, though probably spoken in the hearing of both. The point of importance is the foreknowledge of Jesus, to whom were even now present both the miracle and the result. The first result is expressed in the closing words: 'that the Son of God may be glorified thereby;' the ultimate aim in the former clause: 'for the glory of God.' The true design of the sickness is not to bring death to Lazarus, but to glorify the Son of God, and by this means to bring glory to the Father. Compare chap. 17: 1.

Ver. 5. **Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.** This simple record of His love for this family (note how significant is the separate mention of each one of the three) connects itself both with ver. 4 and also with the statement of vers. 5 and 6,

6 loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When
therefore he heard that he was sick, he abode at that
7 time two days in the place where he was. Then after
this he saith to the disciples, Let us go into Judæa
8 again. The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews
were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou
9 thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve
hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he
stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.
10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because

these verses really constituting one sentence. The object of the Evangelist is to set before us the mind of Jesus: in ver. 4 we see the first principle of all, supreme regard to the glory of God; here His love for those on whom the affliction must fall, and whom (ver. 6) He cannot help save at the hour appointed by His Father. But when that hour has come, His obedience to His Father's will and His love for His sorrowing friends unite in leading Him to Bethany (ver. 7).—The word 'loved' [ἠγαπα] used in this verse is different from that which we find in ver. 3 [φιλεῖς]. The sisters use that which belongs to tender human friendship (see note on chap. 5: 20); the Evangelist the more lofty word, which so often expresses the relation of Jesus to His disciples. He loved them with a love with which the thought of His Father's love to Himself is mingled.—[The Roman tradition falsely identifies Mary of Bethany with Mary of Magdala and the sinful woman (Luke 7: 37). See against this error Lange's Comm., p. 340.]

Vers. 6, 7. Jesus does not say 'to Bethany,' but to 'Judæa;' for He knows that this visit to Bethany will bring Him again into the midst of His enemies, 'the Jews,' and will lead to a development of their hatred and malice, which will find satisfaction only in His death. In the full consciousness of what awaits Him, He prepares to depart for Bethany.

Ver. 8. The words 'but now' (only just now) seem to show that the sojourn in Peræa (chap. 10: 40) was short. The disciples see clearly that to go to Bethany is as perilous as to return to Jerusalem, where He has but now escaped from the rage of 'the Jews' (chap. 10: 31).

Vers. 9, 10. This is the parable of chap. 9: 4 in an expanded form. By the light which God makes to shine in the world, He marks out twelve hours as the appointed time for 'walking,' for active work; by the absence of this light, the night is marked out as the time when there can be no such work. So is the life of every man ordered by God. There is the appointed time for work, indicated by the Providence of God: in following the intimations of His will, the man will 'not stumble,' will take no false step. He will not shorten the proper

11 the light is not in him. These things spake he; and
after this he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus is
fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of
12 sleep. The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord,
13 if he is fallen asleep, he will [1]recover. Now Jesus
had spoken of his death: but they thought that he
14 spake of taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus therefore
15 said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am
glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent
ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

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[1] Gr. *be saved.*

time for 'walking;' for throughout the appointed twelve hours the finger of God will show the appointed work. It is only when man misses the Divine guidance, doing what no providential teaching has marked out, that he stumbleth: then he may well stumble, for the light (which during the day shines round him) is no longer in him. As applied to Himself the words of Jesus mean: 'Following the will of God, which leads me into Judæa again, I am walking in the light, I cannot "stumble" whatever may befall Me there.'

Ver. 11. No second message has been sent to Him; by His own Divine knowledge He speaks of the death of His friend.

Ver. 12. **The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord, if he hath fallen asleep, he shall be saved.** We can hardly escape the thought that they have in their mind some tidings brought at the same time with the message of ver. 3, descriptive of the nature of the illness. Was it some raging fever that threatened the life of Lazarus, then, if calm slumber has come upon him, he is safe! Surely therefore it is no longer necessary for their Lord to expose Himself to peril by returning to Judæa.

Ver. 13. The figure can hardly have been here used by Jesus for the first time. The misconception of His meaning would seem to have arisen from His words in ver. 4, and from His delay in setting out for Bethany.

Vers. 14, 15. The words 'for your sakes' are explained by the clause which follows, 'that ye may believe.' Already they believed in Him; but 'every new flight of faith is in its degree a new beginning of faith, comp. chap. 2: 11' (Meyer). Had he come to Bethany while Lazarus lay sick, He would have healed his sickness; but great as might have been the miracle if He had done so, or if, arriving when Lazarus had just breathed His last, He had called back the departing spirit, in neither case would the disciples have seen the crowning 'manifestation' of their Lord, or have believed in Him as 'the Resurrection and the Life.' The disciples are now awakened to the fact that they are moving into the presence of death.

16 Thomas therefore, who is called [1]Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 So when Jesus came, he found that he had been

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[1] That is, *Twin.*

Ver. 16. **Let us also go, that we may die with him.** That is, with Jesus (not with Lazarus). It is plain that Jesus cannot be turned aside by their counsels or prayers; He is certainly about to return to Judæa, at the peril of His life. As they cannot save Him, they may at least share His fate. This is the exhortation of Thomas to his fellow-disciples; and it would seem that they shared his feelings, for the word 'fellow-disciples' (not found elsewhere in the New Testament), as compared with 'the other disciples' of 20: 25, binds all the disciples into one. The language is undoubtedly that of fervent love to Jesus; but it is also the language of despair and vanished hope. This is the end of all—death; not the Messianic kingdom, not life. Whether we are right in thinking that this feeling was shared by the other disciples, or not, it is very natural that Thomas should be the one to give expression to it. From chap. 14: 5; 20: 24, 25, we clearly perceive that sight is what he wants: when he sees not, he gives himself up to despondency. It is remarkable that at every mention of this apostle, John adds the Greek interpretation (Didymus, that is, *Twin*) of the Aramaic name. It has been supposed that Didymus is the name with which Gentile Christians became most familiar; but if so, it is singular that no other name than Thomas is found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts. By others it is urged that the word 'Twin' is used with symbolic meaning, pointing to the two-fold nature of this apostle, in whom unbelief and faith, hope and tendency to despair, were strangely blended. With this statement the first paragraph of this narrative ends. The last words: 'Let us also go, that we may die with him,' fitly close a section which, as Luther remarks, is dominated by the thought of death.

Ver. 17. **When therefore Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the tomb four days already.** The situation of the Peræan Bethany (chap. 10: 40) is so uncertain that we are unable to give a certain explanation of these four days. The distance from Jerusalem to the nearest point of the country beyond the Jordan is not much more than twenty miles, and could be traversed in a day. If then this was the situation of Bethany beyond the Jordan, Jesus would reach the village of Martha and Mary on the second day from the commencement of His journey, and the fourth day from the reception of the news that Lazarus was sick (ver. 6). In this case the death of Lazarus must speedily have followed the departure of the messenger, and according to Eastern custom the body must on the same day have been laid in the tomb. Even if Bethany in Peræa be placed at a somewhat greater distance from Jerusalem, this explanation removes

18 in the tomb four days already. Now Bethany was
19 nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off; and
many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary,
20 to console them concerning their brother. Martha
therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming,
went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

all difficulties. Still it must be confessed that it is very natural to regard ver. 11 as spoken at the moment of death, though there is nothing in the words 'hath fallen asleep' to compel us to take this view. In that case, the journey (if commenced immediately) must have occupied more than two whole days; yet even in this there is nothing difficult or improbable. Jesus reaches the village where the sisters lived on the fourth day of their mourning, when the lapse of time had brought home to them the hopelessness of their case.

Ver. 18. **Now Bethany is nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.** This verse is of importance, not merely as preparing for ver. 19, but also as showing that Jesus in visiting Bethany was coming into the immediate presence of His enemies. They had pronounced Him a blasphemer, and they were determined to bring Him to the blasphemer's death (10: 31, 39).—['Furlong' or 'stadium' =125 paces. Fifteen furlongs=about two miles. The short distance is mentioned to account for the presence of so many Jews from Jerusalem.—P. S.]

Ver. 19. **And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.** Amongst those who came to pay to the bereaved sisters the visits of condolence during the seven days of mourning, were many of the leaders of the people, many who were also leaders in hostility to Jesus. It is evident that the family of Bethany was one of distinction, and even their friendship to Jesus could not be a bar to their receiving from the Jews these offices of respect and sympathy. But this is not the only contrast which the mention of the Jews calls forth. As leaders of the people, ruling in 'the city of their solemnities,' they were the representatives of their Church and religion; and the 'comfort' they can offer in the presence of death is no inapt symbol of all that Judaism could do for the mourner. Thus on the one side we have human sorrow and the vanity of human comfort in the presence of death; on the other side we have Him who is the Life.

Ver. 20. **Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary still sat in the house.** Every reader must be struck with the remarkable coincidence between this narrative and that of Luke 10: 38, 39, in the portraiture of the two sisters. Martha, even in the midst of her sorrow occupied with attention to family concerns, sees the messenger who announces the approach of Jesus and goes forth to meet Him, outside the village (ver. 30). Mary absorbed in her grief, hears noth-

21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou
22 hadst been here, my brother had not died. And
even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of
23 God, God will give thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy
24 brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I
know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at

ing of the message: it is not until Martha returns to her that she learns that Jesus is near.

Ver. 21. **Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Her first words express no reproach, but only the bitter thought of help come too late. In His presence her brother could not have died (comp. ver. 15). Of the possibility that Jesus might have spoken the word of help, even though their message might reach Him too late to bring Him to their dying brother, she says nothing, though the Jews, unchecked by the reverence of love, freely ask the question among themselves (ver. 37).

Ver. 22. **And even now I know that whatsoever things thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.** The words of this verse are very remarkable. The presence of the great Friend and Helper seems to give a sudden quickening to Martha's faith. She had probably heard of the words of Jesus when the tidings of the sickness of Lazarus reached Him (ver. 4); and these words (which no doubt sorrow of heart and painful waiting had almost banished from her thought) surely gave ground for hope 'even now.' And yet though truly expressive of the firmest confidence in Jesus, her words are vague; and the later narrative seems to prove that no definite expectation was present to her mind. The language is rather that of one who so believes in Jesus as to be assured that, where He is, help and blessing cannot be absent.

Ver. 23. **Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.** The words are designedly ambiguous,—spoken to try her faith. Like our Lord's parables, they contain that of which faith may take hold and be raised into a higher region, but which unbelief or dulness of heart will miss. Will the hope that Martha's words have vaguely expressed now become clear and definite? At all events the answer of Jesus will make her conscious to herself of what her faith really was.

Ver. 24. **Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.** Jesus has told her only what she knew, for every true Israelite believed that in the last day the just would rise. How vague the thought embodied in these words can hardly be understood by us, in whom the same words awaken memories of a Resurrection in the past which brings to us true knowledge of the resurrection at the last day. And if even with us, in the first hours of our sorrow, the clear doctrine avails so little, how small must have been the comfort which the believing Israelite

25 the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though
26 he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?
27 She said unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, *even* he that

could attain in the presence of the dead! Martha's words have now lost the hope which the sight of Jesus awakened: the present sorrow seems to admit of no relief. This moment of greatest need Jesus chooses for the greatest revelation of Himself. When all else has been seen to fail He will comfort.

Vers. 25, 26. The emphasis falls on the first two words, 'I,' 'am.' Martha's first expression of faith and hope had shown how imperfectly she knew Jesus Himself: to Himself alone His words now point. Her later words dwell on the resurrection in the remoter future: Jesus says, 'I AM the resurrection and the life.' Alike in the future and in the present, life is unchangeable in Him (chap. 1: 4),—and that the life which triumphs over death ('resurrection') the life by which death is excluded and annulled. In other passages we read of Jesus as the Life, here only as the Resurrection: the latter thought is in truth contained in the former, and needs not distinct expression save in the presence of the apparent victory of death. It is possible that the meaning of our Lord's words is the resurrection and the *life which follows* the resurrection,—in Him His people rise again, and, having risen, live for ever; but it is far more probable that this is only one part of the meaning. Because He is the Life, in the highest and absolute sense of this word, therefore He is the resurrection. He that believes in Him becomes one with Him: every one, therefore, that believes in Him possesses this victorious life. If he has died, yet life is his: if he still lives among men, this earthly life is but an emblem and a part of that all-embracing life which shall endure for ever in union with the Lord of life. In all this the law which limits man's life on earth is not forgotten, but a revelation is given to man which changes the meaning of death. As Godet beautifully says: 'Every believer is in reality and for ever sheltered from death. To die in full light, in the serene brightness of the life which is in Jesus, and to continue to live in Him, is no longer that which human language designates by the name of death. It is as if Jesus said: In me he who is dead is sure of life, and he who lives is sure never to die.' The original, indeed, is much more expressive than we can well bring out in English, 'Shall never unto eternity die.' To the question, 'Believest thou this?' Martha answers (and the form of her answer is characteristic):—

Ver. 27. **She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, he that cometh into the world.** The substitution of 'I have believed' for 'I

28 cometh into the world. And when he had said
this, she went away, and called Mary [1]her sister secretly, saying, The [2]Master is here, and calleth thee.
29 And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went
30 unto him. (Now Jesus was not yet come into the
village, but was still in the place where Martha met
31 him). The Jews then which were with her in the
house, and were comforting her, when they saw
Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb
32 to weep[3] there. Mary therefore, when she came

[1] Or, *her sister, saying secretly.* [2] Or, *Teacher.* [3] Gr. *wail.*

believe' is striking. It seems to imply that she goes back on her previous belief,—securely founded, never shaken,—in which she knows that all He requires must be contained. His last words have been in some measure new and unfamiliar, and in her present state of mind she is incapable of comparing the old and the new. But that which she has believed and still believes contains the fullest recognition of her Lord. She has received Him as the fulfilment of Messianic hope, the revelation of the Divine to man, the long-expected Redeemer of the world.

Ver. 28. **And when she had so said, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, The Teacher is come, and calleth thee.** We cannot doubt that Mary until now had been in ignorance of the coming of Jesus, or that it was at His bidding that Martha told her sister secretly of His call for her. That which He was about to do He would have faith, not unbelief, to see; therefore Mary must be called 'secretly.'

Ver. 29. **And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went unto him.** Mark the characteristic touch in the words 'arose quickly' (comp. ver. 20). 'Went unto,' *i. e.*, started on her way, for it is in ver. 32 that the actual coming is spoken of.

Ver. 30. **Now Jesus was not yet come into the village.** Avoiding the presence of 'the Jews,' so painful and incongruous at such a time. This verse is purely parenthetical.

Ver. 31. Mary sought to go alone, but, according to the custom of the East, the friends who were with her attend her to the tomb to join in her lamentation over the dead. That they will meet Jesus has apparently not entered into their thought.

Ver. 32. Her first words are nearly the same as her sister's: there is only in the Greek a slight difference in the place of '*my* brother' which gives a touching emphasis to the expression of personal loss. Often may the sisters have repeated such words during their hours of anguish, when their brother was sinking before their eyes. Mary's

where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his
feet, saying unto him Lord, if thou hadst been here,
33 my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore
saw her [1]weeping, and the Jews *also* [1]weeping which
came with her, he [2]groaned in the spirit, and [3]was

[1] Gr. *wailing.* [2] Or, *was moved with indignation in the spirit.* [3] Gr. *troubled himself.*

absorbing grief makes other words impossible: she falls at the feet of Jesus weeping.

Ver. 33. **When Jesus therefore saw her lamenting, and the Jews lamenting which came with her, he was moved with indignation in his spirit, and troubled himself.** There is little doubt that the first word describing the emotion [ἐνεβριμήσατο] of Jesus denotes rather anger than sorrow. Such is its regular meaning; and, though New Testament usage partly gives a different turn to the word, yet in every passage it implies a severity of tone and feeling that is very different from grief. In Mark 14: 5 it expresses indignation at what appeared reckless waste, and in Matt. 9: 30 and Mark 1: 43 it denotes stern dealing, a severity that marked the giving of the charge; while in the Septuagint the noun derived from the verb is used to translate the Hebrew noun signifying indignation or anger. The only other passage in the New Testament in which we find the word is ver. 38 of this chapter. That we are to understand it as implying anger seems thus to be clear, and we are strengthened in this conclusion by the fact that the early Greek fathers take it in this sense. It is more difficult to answer the question, At what was Jesus angry? It has been replied—(1) at Himself, because He was moved to a sympathy and compassion *which it was needful to restrain.* In this case the words 'His spirit' are supposed to be directly governed by the verb—'was indignant at His spirit.' But such a use of 'spirit' is surely impossible, while the explanation as a whole does violence to those conceptions of the humanity of our Lord which this very Gospel teaches us to form;—(2) at the unbelief and hypocritical weeping of 'the Jews.' But many of them were to believe (ver. 45); and there is nothing to indicate that their weeping was not genuine. Besides this, the emotion of Jesus is traced to the lamenting of Mary not less than to that of the Jews; and the whole narrative gains immeasurably in force if we suppose the latter to have been as sincere as the former;—(3) at the misery brought into the world by sin. This explanation appears upon the whole to be the most probable.* As to the words 'in His spirit,' without entering into

* ['In this heart-rending scene of mourning: the grave of the departed friend, the broken hearts of the beloved sisters, and the tears of the fellow-mourners, Jesus saw a miniature picture of the world of human sorrow, and was overwhelmed at once with holy indignation at sin which caused this fearful desolation, and with tender sympathy for the sufferers, which soon found vent in tears.—*Der Menschheit ganzer Jammer fusst mich an.*'—P. S.]

34 troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They
35 say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.
36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!
37 But some of them said, Could not this man, which
opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused

any discussion of a difficult subject, we may say that, 'as the 'spirit' denotes the highest (and so to speak) innermost part of man's nature, the language shows that our Lord's nature was stirred to its very depth. This reference to the spirit assists us in understanding the words that follow 'and troubled Himself:' the indignation and horror of the spirit threw the whole 'self' into disturbance. The meaning of chap. 13: 21, where a similar expression occurs, is substantially the same: there we read that, at the thought of the presence of sin, of such evil as was about to show itself in His betrayal by Judas, Jesus was 'troubled' (that is, agitated, disturbed) 'in His spirit.'

Vers. 34, 35. **And he said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.** The question is addressed to the sisters, and 'the Jews' give place to them in thought, for it is in sympathy with the bitter anguish of those whom He loves (well though He knows that He is about to assuage their grief) that the tears of Jesus are shed. The word differs from that used in vers. 31, 33, where the meaning is not calm weeping, but lamentation and wailing.—['Jesus wept.' The shortest verse in the Bible, and yet one of the most significant. He wept three times: tears of *friendship* at the grave of Lazarus; tears of *sorrow* over unbelieving Jerusalem (Luke 19: 41); tears of bloody *agony* in Gethsemane under the burden of the sin and guilt of mankind (Luke 22: 44; comp. Heb. 5: 7). The eternal Son of God in tears! How near He is brought to us! He proves His full humanity before He manifests His divinity in raising the departed friend. So He slept just before He stilled the storm (Matt. 8: 24). How much more natural, lovely and attractive is a sympathizing Saviour than a cold and heartless Stoic! He has sanctified tears, provided we sorrow not immoderately like those who have no hope (1 Thess. 1: 13), and remember that He is the Resurrection and the Life.—P. S.]

Vers. 36, 37. Again there is a division amongst the Jews. Many recognize the naturalness of His tears as a proof of His love for the departed. But some (in no spirit of simple wonder and perplexity, but in unfriendliness) ask why He had not prevented the calamity over which He is mourning. They may mean: As He gave sight to the blind man, could He not, if He had really wished, have stayed the power of the fatal disease? But it is also possible that they merely assume the former miracle for the purpose of invalidating it: If He really did give sight, why could He not heal the sickness? To heal diseases was to them a less wonderful act than to give sight to one born blind. We are compelled to assume an unfriendly spirit of

38 that this man also should not die? Jesus therefore
again [1]groaning in himself cometh to the tomb.
Now it was a cave, and a stone lay [2]against it.
39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the
sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by
this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four
40 days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee,
that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory

[1] Or, *being moved with indignation in himself.* [2] Or, *upon.*

the second question, partly because of John's use of the term 'the Jews,' partly from the analogy of many other passages in which He records the opposing comments of different sections of the party: the sequel also (vers. 45, 46) seems naturally to suggest such a division. The recurrence (in ver. 38) of the word discussed above (ver. 33) is thus very easily explained.

Ver. 38. **Jesus therefore again moved with indignation in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.** The indignation was again excited either by the malicious comment just made by some of the Jews, or by the renewed recollection of the power of evil in the world. Like Jewish tombs in general, this was a natural cave or, more probably, a vault artificially excavated in the limestone rock. The entrance was closed by a stone, which lay against it (or possibly *upon* it). This verse again furnishes an indication that the family was not poor.

Ver. 39. **Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. The sister of him that was dead, Martha, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been four days here.** No expectation of some great blessing which God will give in answer to the prayer of Jesus (ver. 22) is now in Martha's mind. She cannot understand the removal of the stone. To her, as the (elder) sister, the right of expostulation belonged; and it is in the simplest and most direct terms that she urges that the dead may not be exposed to the living. Nothing could more vividly illustrate the power which at this moment death wielded alike over the body of the departed and his sister's spirit. It is probably to bring out this power in the most forcible manner possible that not only is Martha described as 'the sister of him that was dead, but that the description precedes her name. How differently does the Evangelist himself feel! It is instructive to observe that in the words 'him that was dead' he changes the term for death, using not that of ver. 26, but another which expresses simply coming to the end of life.

Ver. 40. Martha would have prevented the removal of the stone; but this wish was but a symbol of a real hindrance in the Saviour's way—her decline in faith. She has for the time come completely under the influence of 'the things seen.' The reality of her loss is

41 of God? So they took away the stone. And Jesus
lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that
42 thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest
me always: but because of the multitude which standeth
around I said it, that they may believe that thou
43 didst send me. And when he had thus spoken, he
44 cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He
that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with
[1]grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a

[1] Or, *grave-bands.*

too much for her, and she cannot join the words of Jesus in vers. 25, 26, with His present actions. In saying 'believe' He recalls those words of His to her thought; and not those words only, but also His first saying (ver. 4), that the sickness was 'not unto death, but for the glory of God.'

Vers. 41, 42. The words are not a prayer, but a thanksgiving for prayer answered. What He is about to do is given by the Father in answer to His prayer. But had Jesus said no more than this, though the miracle would have ministered to 'the glory of God' (ver. 4), yet even this purpose would have been attained in an inferior degree; the Father receives true glory when Jesus is acknowledged, not merely as a Prophet, whose prayer is heard, but as the Son of God. To His thanksgiving Jesus adds words which implicitly declare the whole relation of the Father to the Son. The hearing of prayer, for which He has given thanks, is no isolated act, but is one manifestation of an unceasing communion. Whilst uttering the words of prayer or of thanksgiving, He knew that the Father heard Him *always;* the words were spoken for the sake of the multitude, that they might believe the truth of His mission. Had they witnessed the miracle unaccompanied by this appeal to His Father, they might well have glorified God, who had given such power unto men, and acknowledged that as a wonder-working Prophet, Jesus was sent and empowered by God. But if the power of God is manifested now, when this solemn claim is made of constant communion with God, with God as 'Father,' the seal of the Father is set upon Him as the Son and the Sent of God. The word 'multitude' cannot signify number only and refer to 'the Jews' before spoken of. John always employs this word in another sense, and indeed in marked distinction from the ruling class, 'the Jews.' It is clear then that many were now present—persons who had accompanied Jesus from Peræa, and friends and neighbors of the family of Bethany.

Vers. 43, 44. The words 'bound hand and foot' perhaps convey a wrong impression: as the more literal meaning is 'his hands and his feet bound with grave-bands,' it is very possible that the limbs were napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

## Chapter 11 : 45–57.

### *The Effect of the Raising of Lazarus.*

45 Many therefore of the Jews, which came to Mary and beheld [1]that which he did, believed on him.
46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

[1] Many ancient authorities read *the things which he did.*

separately bound, so that, life having returned, free movement was permitted to them. The miracle wrought, the Evangelist adds nothing concerning Lazarus or his sisters. It is Jesus Himself who is the centre of the scene, who has shown Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Even the impression which this most wonderful of miracles produces is recorded only in its relation to Jesus and to belief in Him.

### *The Effect of the Raising of Lazarus*, vers. 45-57.

Contents.—The most striking of all the miracles of Jesus has been performed, and His manifestation of Himself to the world has ended. The effect is proportionate. On the one hand, faith is awakened in the hearts of 'many' of His most determined enemies 'the Jews.' On the other hand, final measures are taken to seize and kill Him. Jesus retires to a city near the wilderness along with His disciples. It is the pause before the last journey to Jerusalem, to which He is to go as the Paschal Lamb selected for the true Paschal sacrifice and feast. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 45, 46; (2) vers. 47-53; (3) vers. 54–57.

Ver. 45. The statement is very remarkable, but the language of the original is so clear as to leave no doubt as to the meaning. The great manifestations of our Lord to the people, whether in word or in miracle, were usually, as we have several times seen, followed by a marked division of opinion and feeling among His hearers. There is such a division in the present instance, as the next verse shows; but the effect of the miracle is great beyond precedent, for *all* those of 'the Jews' who had come to the house of Mary (ver. 19), and who with her witnessed the actions of Jesus, became believers in Him.

Ver. 46. It is impossible, we think, that what is here related can have been done with friendly motives, or from a mere sense of duty to men whose office made them spiritual guides of the people. The analogy of many passages in which John similarly records diverging opinions makes it plain that the giving of this information to the Pharisees was an act of hostility to Jesus. If so, the word 'them' at the beginning of the verse must refer to 'the Jews' in general, not

47 The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees
gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this
48 man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone,
all men will believe on him: and the Romans will
come and take away both our place and our nation.
49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high
50 priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing

to those who are described in the preceding verse. At this period of our Lord's history the Pharisees have as a body declared against Him; to this large and powerful sect, therefore, the news of the event is brought.

Ver. 47. Here, probably for the first time in this Gospel, we read of the meeting of the Sanhedrin,—not a formal meeting, but one hastily summoned in the sudden emergency that had arisen. (See the note on chap. 7: 32). The question 'What do we?' is not so much deliberative (*What are we to do?*) as reproachful of themselves, What are we doing? This man (a designation of dislike or contempt) is working many miracles and we do nothing—take no steps to prevent the evil that must follow! The Evangelist is careful to preserve their testimony against themselves; in the moment of their rage they acknowledge the 'many signs' of Jesus, and confess themselves without excuse.

Ver. 48. The fear was natural. It is true that they were already subject to the Roman power. But, with their usual policy towards tributary states, the Romans had left them their worship, temple, and religious administration, untouched. If Jesus (whom they *will* not recognise in His religious claims) shall be owned as Messiah, and popular tumult shall ensue, all these privileges will be taken away from them. Their fear therefore is real; their guilt lay not in a hypocritical pretence of alarm, but in their wilful blindness to the truth. There can be no doubt whatever that their words are quoted by the Evangelist as an unconscious prophecy (comp. chap. 7: 35; 12: 19; 19: 19, and below, ver. 50), or rather as a prophecy to be fulfilled in that irony of events which shall bring on them in their unbelief the very calamities they feared, while faith would have secured for them the contrasted blessings. Because the Jewish people did not believe in Jesus, but rejected Him, the Romans did take away both their 'place and nation:' had they believed they would have been established for ever in the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

Vers. 49, 50. **But a certain one of them, named Caiaphas, being high priest of that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is profitable for you that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not** Caiaphas was a Sadducee, a powerful and crafty man. He was high priest for about eighteen years (A. D. 18-36), but is here

at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient
for you that one man should die for the people, and
51 that the whole nation perish not. Now this he said
not of himself: but being high priest that year, he
prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation;
52 and not for the nation only, but that he might also
gather together into one the children of God that

spoken of (as in chap. 18 : 13) as being 'high priest of that year.' This remarkable expression has no reference to the high priest's precarious tenure of office in those times (as many as 25 high priests are enumerated in the century preceding the destruction of Jerusalem); nor is there the smallest pretence for attributing to the Evangelist a historical mistake (such as a belief that the office was annual!). The simple meaning is that Caiaphas was high priest in that memorable year, in which the true sacrifice for the sins of the people was offered, by that death of which the high priest unconsciously prophesied, and in causing which moreover he was in great measure the instrument. The first words spoken by Caiaphas are intheir brusque haughtiness characteristic of the sect to which he belonged. His whole address to the Pharisees is marked by heartless selfishness, 'If we let him alone we shall be brought to ruin,' the Pharisees had said: 'Save yourself and let Him perish,' is the uncompromising answer of this high priest. He seems to use two very different words in the same sense: '*people*' was the name of Israel in its theocratic aspect, '*nation*' (the word the Pharisees had used) was a term common to Israel, with all other peoples of the world. 'People' is a name which the Sanhedrists would use in reference to their own rule; 'nation' is that which the Romans would attack and destroy. Unscrupulous and utterly unjust as this counsel was, it was politic and crafty. It will commend them to the Romans if they can show themselves willing to destroy any one of whom it may be even pretended that he seeks to disturb their rule.

Vers. 51, 52. **But this spake he not of himself: but being high priest of that year, he prophesied, etc.** The words are a prophecy: heartless and unscrupulous in meaning and intention, they are so controlled as to express profound and blessed truth. In the earlier days of the nation a prophetic spirit was ever believed to rest upon the high priest (comp. Ex. 28: 30; Num. 27: 21; Hosea 3: 4). When the office became degraded, and the high priest the servant of ambition and covetousness, prophetic guidance was no longer sought from him; but, as in the Old Testament we read of false prophets who in spite of themselves were compelled to be the medium of proclaiming God's will, so is it here. We see now the significance of the words 'people' and 'nation.' He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation,—*i. e.*, for the Jews, henceforth but one of

53 are scattered abroad. So from that day forth they
took counsel that they might put him to death.
54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among
the Jews, but departed thence into the country near
to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and
55 there he tarried with the disciples. Now the pass-
over of the Jews was at hand: and many went up
to Jerusalem out of the country before the pass-

the nations of the world, ranked with the Gentiles whom they scorned. The object of this death should also be, 'that He might gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.' The latter prophecy is found by the Evangelist in the word 'people' of ver. 50, 'that one man should die for the *people*.' No longer does this name belong to Jews alone. The sacrifice is offered in behalf of all children of God, all to whom the Father offers sonship, gathered henceforth into one under the new name of 'the people' of God. Compare the striking parallels in chap. 7: 35; 10: 16; 17: 20.

Ver. 53. **From that day forth, therefore, they took counsel that they might put him to death.** Not that they might pass sentence of death upon him; that is done: but that they might execute the sentence. Their previous efforts of rage against Jesus had been connected with moments of special excitement; henceforth they are deliberate, determined, constant. The cup of iniquity of 'the Jews' is full.

Ver. 54. The time of 'free speech' (see note on chap. 7: 4) was at an end: from this time Jesus avoided communication with 'the Jews,' no longer vouchsafing to them the word which they heard only to reject. The place to which He withdrew afforded a deeper solitude than that sought by Him a little while before (chap. 10: 40). The crisis in His life is graver; the retirement which he seeks is more profound. There is no mention now (as in 10: 41) of many who resorted unto Him: the town to which He retired is described as 'near to the wilderness.' Ephraim, possibly the same as Ophrah (1 Sam. 13: 17), is commonly identified with el-Taiyibeh, a village 16 miles from Jerusalem and 4 or 5 east of Bethel, situated on a hill which commands the valley of the Jordan. The wilderness will be 'the wild uncultivated hill country north-east of Jerusalem, lying between the central towns and the Jordan valley' (*See Smith's Dict. of Bible*, and Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 214, 419).

Ver 55. **And the pasover of the Jews was nigh at hand.** See the notes on chap. 2: 13; 6: 4. No one who has followed the narrative of this Gospel with care up to the present point can doubt that the expression is used with deep, indeed with terrible significance. —**And they went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves.** It does not appear that

56 over, to purify themselves. They sought therefore
for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood
in the temple, What think ye? That he will not
57 come to the feast? Now the chief priests, and the
Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man
knew where he was, he should shew it, that they
might take him.

## CHAPTER 12: 1–36.

### *Homage to Jesus, who in Death triumphs over Death.*

1 Jesus therefore six days before the passover came

there was any special injunction with regard to purification before the Passover; but the feast fell under the general law of purification, and defiled persons did not feel themselves qualified to partake of the Passover (comp. 18 : 28). These strangers from the country, therefore, assembled in Jerusalem several days before the festival, that in the holy city they might seek the preparation that was requisite.

Ver. 56. The language is that of earnest and interested inquiry. Those who are talking together are friendly to Jesus, and hopeful and expectant that He will appear at the festival. The groups assemble in the temple-courts, where many of them may have come to bring offerings for purification (ver. 55), and where Jesus had been wont to teach. The word 'therefore' at the beginning of this verse seems to point to the privacy into which Jesus had retired (ver. 54). These pilgrims came to Jerusalem, hoping to meet with Jesus, but they saw Him not: they sought Him therefore, etc. (comp. chap. 7: 11).

Ver. 57. **Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandments,** [*ἐντολάσ*]* **that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it that they might seize him.** As the last verse has described the eager interest of the friends of Jesus, this verse presents a picture of His enemies. In pursuance of the resolve related above (ver. 53) commandments had been issued —the plural seems to point to orders sent to all parts of the land —that all the faithful should aid the rulers in apprehending Jesus. These latter verses show us the friends and the foes of Jesus alike occupying the field in preparation for the end.

### *Homage to Jesus, who in Death triumphs over Death,* vers. 1–36.

CONTENTS.—Jesus has been doomed to death (11: 53, 57), and the hour is at hand when He shall be seized, and the sentence executed. But the malice of man cannot interfere with the purposes of God. In the midst of dangers, under sentence of death, the Redeemer pursues His path of glory. Three pictures illustrating this are pre-

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[* A difference of reading, *ἐντολάσ* and *ἐντολὴν*.—P. S.]

to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised
2 from the dead. So they made him a supper there:

sented in the section of the twelfth chapter now before us. The subordinate parts of this section are—(1) vers. 1–11, the anointing in Bethany; (2) vers. 12–19, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; (3) vers. 20–36, the homage of the Greeks to Jesus.

Ver. 1. The word *therefore* marks a close connection with the general statement of chap. 11: 55. As to the particular date here spoken of, there has been much difference of opinion. The point from which the Evangelist reckons is the 14th day of Nisan or Abib, the first month in the Jewish sacred year. 'In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover' (Lev. 23: 5). On this fourteenth day, 'between the evenings' (Ex. 12: 6), that is (probably) between sunset and the time when darkness came on, the Paschal lamb was to be slain. With the evening of the fourteenth day (using day in its ordinary sense) began, according to Jewish reckoning, the fifteenth day of the month, which, lasting until the following sunset, was the first of the seven days of unleavened bread. The Paschal meal, therefore, was eaten at the close of the fourteenth natural day, but at the beginning of the fifteenth day according to the computation of the Jews. Starting then from the 14th of Nisan, the 'six days' will bring us to the 8th; and if, as is generally believed, the 15th of Nisan fell on Friday in this year, the 8th will coincide with the same day in the preceding week. The only doubt respecting the correctness of this view arises from a peculiarity sometimes found in Jewish notes of time—both the first day and the last in an interval being included in the reckoning, so that 'six days before' might really mean 'the sixth day before,' that is 'five days before;' but as it is certain that the Jews themselves could speak of 'one day before the Passover' (using this very form of expression)—words to which only one meaning can possibly be given—it seems perfectly certain that the reckoning in this verse must be taken in its exact and natural sense, as we have taken it above. It was therefore on the 8th of Nisan, at some part of the day which we should call the Friday before the Passover, that Jesus arrived in Bethany. This day, as we learn from Josephus, was often chosen by the bands of pilgrims for their arrival in Jerusalem: those referred to in chap. 11: 55 had come earlier than others to the holy city for a special reason. As the Sabbath commenced on the evening of this day, we may most naturally assume that Jesus reached Bethany before sunset. In adding to the name of this place the words: 'where Lazarus was whom Jesus raised from the dead,' the Evangelist in part intends to prepare the way for the narrative that follows, but also seeks to connect his narrative with the wonderful record of chap. 11, and to place the glory of Jesus as the Prince and Giver of Life in contrast with the designs of His enemies to seize Him and put Him to death (11: 53).

Ver. 2. **There therefore they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at**

and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them
3 that sat at meat with him. Mary therefore took a
pound of ointment of [1]spikenard, very precious, and

[1] See marginal note on Mark 14: 3.

**the table with him.** Two points only are mentioned by John, that a feast was given in honor of Jesus, and that every member of the family so signally blessed was present. By whom, when and where, the feast was given, are questions to which he returns no answer. Different conclusions may be drawn from the words of this verse; but they seem most naturally to imply that the entertainment was not given in the house or by the family of Lazarus. It is true that 'Martha served;' yet we may well suppose that, wherever the feast took place, this was an office she would claim; and the insertion of the clause relating to Lazarus is hardly to be accounted for if Jesus were a guest in his house. As to the question of time, ver. 12 seems to show that the evening of the feast must have been that following the Sabbath rather than the evening with which the Sabbath commenced. Between this verse therefore and ver. 1 we must interpose the rest of the Sabbath. We are now at liberty to turn to the account of the Synoptists. Luke relates nothing (in connection with this period) that is similar to the narrative before us; but the other two Evangelists describe a supper and an anointing which manifestly are identical with what John records here. Some slight differences in detail will be called up as the narrative proceeds: the only serious question is one relating to time. In Matt. 26: 2 we are brought to a date two days before the Passover, whereas the feast in question is related in later verses (6–13). But there is nothing whatever in Matthew's account to fix the *time* of the feast: and both the structure of his Gospel and the apparent links of connection in this particular narrative are consistent with the view that at ver. 6 he goes back to relate an earlier event, which furnished occasion to Judas for furthering the design of the rulers, as recorded in the first verses of the chapter. If then there is no doubt of the identity of the events mentioned by the Synoptists and by John, we learn that the feast was given in the house of Simon the leper, a person of whom we know nothing more.

Ver. 3. By 'ointment' we are to understand rather a liquid perfume than what we commonly know as ointment. The precise kind of ointment or perfume has been much controverted. The words, which literally mean *ointment of nard 'pistic,'* are the same as those employed by Mark (14: 3); in each place our English version has 'spikenard,' a word suggested by the rendering of the Vulgate in Mark (*nardus spicatus*), and used by our translators in three passages of the Old Testament (Cant. 1: 12; 4: 13, 14). In the passages last named the word that stands in the Hebrew text is *nĕrd*, evidently identical with the *nardos* used here by John: the word is said to be really of Persian origin, denoting a perfume brought from India by anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of

Persian traders. It will be seen that our translation has practically passed over the epithet 'pistic,' as to the meaning of which there exists the greatest uncertainty. By some it is explained as *potable* (the fine nard-oil being sometimes drunk); others refer the word to a root meaning to *press* or *pound* (the oil being obtained by pressure); whilst others maintain that the word is not descriptive of any species of nard, but denotes its *genuineness.* The most probable opinion is that *pistic* is a geographical term which was at the time familiarly associated with the name of the perfume as an article of commerce, though now the exact significance is lost. From the parallel narratives (Matt. 26: 7; Mark 14: 3) we learn that, as a fluid, it was kept in a flask (for this is the truer rendering of the Greek word translated *alabaster box)* hermetically sealed; and the contents would be extracted by breaking off the neck. As the ointment was a fluid, and the neck of the flask was broken off, we seem entitled to infer that the whole was used. The quantity which Mary had bought was very large, for the 'pound' here spoken of was equivalent to about twelve ounces avoirdupois. Its preciousness is best illustrated by a later verse (ver. 5), where we find 300 denarii (in Mark 14: 5, *more than* 300 denarii) mentioned as its probable value. If we take the denarius at 8½ d. [17 cents], the value ordinarily assigned, this sum amounts to £10, 12s., 6 d. [$51]. The true principle of calculation, however, is that the sum be estimated according to the power of purchase which it represents; and it would be easy to show that 300 denarii would ordinarily purchase a larger quantity of wheat (for example) than could now be obtained for £20 [$100] of our money.—**And anointed the feet of Jesus**, etc. With this precious perfume, then, Mary anointed the feet of her Lord. The other Evangelists speak of 'the head,' not 'the feet,' and of the ointment as poured down over the head. There is no discrepancy between the accounts. Both feet and head were anointed; John speaks of the former because the words which he is about to add refer to the feet alone; and though the other narratives mention no more than the anointing of the head, yet the words of Jesus related by both Evangelists speak of the ointment as poured upon His 'body,' and as designed to prepare Him for His burial. Perhaps in a writer like John, who seizes so powerfully the symbolism (the real symbolism, not a possible subjective application) of the various events in his Master's life, we ought also to connect this anointing of the feet of Jesus (*twice* mentioned, here and 11: 2) with His washing of the disciples' feet to be related in the chapter which follows. Over against cleansing of their feet soiled by the day's travel is set the honor due to the very feet of Him to whom contact with earthly life brought not even a transient stain. Be this as it may, Mary's action as here described, her use of the most precious ointment, whose odor filled the whole house (a fact which is far

4 the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disci-
5 ples, which should betray him, saith, Why was not
this ointment sold for three hundred [1] pence, and given
6 to the poor. Now this he said, not because he cared
for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having

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[1] See marginal note on Matt. 18: 28.

more than a mere historical reminiscence), and the devotion of that which is a woman's chief ornament to the purpose of wiping the feet which she had anointed, picture to us most impressively her gratitude and humble reverence.

Ver. 4. **But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, he that was about to betray him, saith.** After the picture of the highest loving homage to Him whom the Jewish rulers had adjudged to death, the Evangelist gives the contrasted view of an apostle, who, apostle as he was, would shortly be seeking to betray his Lord, and who showed the present workings of his heart by grudging the lavish expression of Mary's faith and love.

Ver. 5. **Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence** [*denarii*], **and given to the poor?** Care for the poor is the mask which the murmuring protest of Judas wears. Thus sin, that it may the better extinguish the virtue by which at the moment it is offended, is wont to pay reverence to some other virtue,—some virtue which may be thought of without trouble, because it is not really present and in question. But the Evangelist in recording the words strips off the mask.

Ver. 6. **But this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and, having the bag, bare away what was put therein.** Matthew mentions the murmuring on the part of *some* of the disciples: evidently, therefore, the plausible remonstrance of Judas led more honest and guileless minds than his to share in the wonder which his words expressed. John speaks of Judas only, as he alone reveals the real motive of the complaint. The somewhat remarkable word rendered 'bag' is found twice only in the New Testament, here and in 13: 29; in the Septuagint it occurs only in 2 Chron. 24: 8, 10, 11. It was not a bag, but rather a small box or chest. As in the only passages of the Old Testament in which the word occurs it denotes a receptacle for offerings made to the temple, it is perhaps more than a coincidence that it is here chosen by John when he would speak of the small store of money possessed by Jesus (the True temple) and His disciples,—money derived from the voluntary offerings of the few who had recognized His glory and consecrated their substance to the supply of His wants. Another word in this verse requires remark. that which in the Authorized Version appears as 'bare,' but which we have rendered 'bare away.' The former is the more common meaning of the word both in classical Greek and in the New Testament; but the lat-

7 the [1]bag [2]took away what was put therein. Jesus therefore said, [3]Suffer her to keep it against the day

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[1] Or, *box.* [2] Or, *carried what was put therein.*

[3] Or, *Let her alone:* it was *that she might keep it.*

ter (which often occurs in later Greek) is certainly intended by John in a later verse of the Gospel (20: 15, 'if thou have borne him away'). It seems impossible that the word can have the neutral meaning here: partly because, after the mention of the dishonesty of Judas, the statement that he carried that which was cast into the common chest would be a strange anti-climax; and partly because it would be difficult to see why John should write such a sentence as this, 'and, *having the bag, carried what was put therein.*'

Ver. 7. **Jesus therefore said, Let her alone, that for the day of the preparation for my burial she may keep it.** The meaning of the word which in the Authorized Version is rendered 'burial' is made clear by 19: 40 (where substantially the same word is used); 'they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to prepare for burial.' The true reading of the Greek text, that which our rendering represents, undoubtedly presents a difficulty, as we, knowing that our Lord is speaking of the day then present, cannot understand how Jesus can say 'that . . . she may keep it.' The simplest solution of the difficulty, were it admissible, is afforded by the rendering, 'Suffer that she may have kept it;' but it is very doubtful whether the Greek words can admit of this translation. Another suggestion is that, as the quantity of nard was so great, our Lord refers to the portion still remaining in the flask. The objection to this is found in what has been said of the mode of opening the flask and in the 'pouring described by the other Evangelists: it is not easy to see that any portion worth speaking of could still remain. We must not forget that these words were enigmatical, and intentionally so. Our Lord was not distinctly affirming that this day was, so to speak, the day on which He was prepared for entombment: it was His wont to use language which but partially revealed the approaching event, which seemed to unenlightened hearers to contain only some dark hint of trouble impending, but which stood forth in luminous significance when the implied prophecy was ready to be fulfilled. Hence here, in speaking of the (unconscious or half-unconscious) purpose of Mary, He uses words which leave the time of the conception and fulfilment of the purpose altogether doubtful. His answer amounts to this: Meddle not with the intention that she has had to keep this for the day on which I must be prepared for the tomb. It is possible that the sentence is left incomplete, and that there is a break between the two parts:—'Let her alone;'—'that she may keep it unto the day,' etc. Such an elliptic use of a clause of purpose is not uncommon in this Gospel. If we may assume that we have an example of this usage here, the meaning will be, It is, or, It was, or, She hath bought

8 of my burying. For the poor ye have always with
you; but me ye have not always.
9 The common people therefore of the Jews learned
that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake
only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he
10 had raised from the dead. But the chief priests took

this ointment, that she might keep it, etc. The meaning is almost the same as that previously given. The word which our Lord uses in this verse shows in what light this section is to be viewed. It is not so much the living Saviour that we have before us, as the Saviour on whom sentence of death has been passed. At the feet of Him whom 'the Jews' are seeking to kill, and whom false friends are betraying, faith pours her richest treasures. Mary thought only of showing her reverence and love: Jesus sees in it a prophetic recognition of the impending event which crowned His humiliation and became His exaltation. The Evangelist relates an unconscious prophecy on the part of a disciple, as he has related a prophecy by an enemy who 'spake not of himself' (11: 51).

Ver. 8. **For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always.** The duty of giving to the poor is fully recognized: it must never be forgotten. But there are moments when what may seem lavish waste upon objects visible only to the eye of faith are to be commended for the faith that is present in them. How often has the history of the world borne testimony to the truth thus declared by Jesus! The very charity that cares for the poor whom we see has been kept alive by faith in, and devotion to, the crucified Redeemer whom we cannot see.

Ver. 9. Faith and unbelief have revealed themselves in the case of the friends and the enemies of Jesus, and especially in the deed of Mary and the words of Judas. But the sifting process which accompanies every manifestation of Jesus extends to a wider circle. Once more (comp. chap. 11: 45, 46), and much more clearly than before, the Evangelist records the division among 'the Jews' themselves; for we have no right to take this term in any other than that sense which is so firmly established in this Gospel. That very circle of Jewish influence and power in which till lately the spirit of narrow bigotry and fanaticism had found its expression in determined hostility to Jesus is divided into two classes, 'the common people of the Jews,' and the rulers in this ruling faction, 'the high priests.'

Vers. 10, 11. When the rulers found that even their own adherents were deserting them (comp. 11: 48), their rage knew no bounds. Lazarus had not incurred their displeasure, but everything that ministered to the success of the cause of Jesus must be swept out of the way. It is easy to see that the conflict of Jesus with the Jews is continually growing in intensity, and has well-nigh reached its climax. The effect produced by the recent miracle has been great be-

11 counsel that they might put Lazarus unto death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 On the morrow [1]a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming
13 to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord,

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *the common people.*

yond all previous example. Yet we cannot but feel that to the Evangelist himself the miracle would be most precious as a 'sign;' and that what he intends us to feel most deeply is the contrast between the rulers bent on His death and the calm majesty of Him who is 'the Resurrection and the Life,'' in whose presence are Lazarus, the trophy and emblem of His power over life physical, and believers come from the very ranks of his adversaries to receive life spiritual through believing in Him.

Ver. 12. **The next day**, that is, the day following the feast in Bethany (see on ver. 2), and therefore our Sunday; the day fixed in the tradition of the Church for the triumphal entry, tradition thus confirming the exegesis of the text, and finding in the latter support for its own correctness. This first day of the Jewish week was the 10th Nisan, the day on which the typical Paschal lamb was selected and set apart for sacrifice (Ex. 12: 3).—**The common people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.** 'The common people' here spoken of are not 'the Jews' (ver. 9), but the multitude that had assembled at Jerusalem at the time in order to celebrate the Passover. It would seem that this crowd was afterwards joined by those belonging to Jerusalem itself who had gone out previously to Bethany to see Jesus (ver. 17). Of the impression produced upon the latter we have already heard. The feelings animating the former appear both in their actions and in their words.

Ver. 13. **Took the branches of the palm trees.** The word rendered 'branches' occurs only here in the New Testament. It is the top of a palm tree where the fruit is produced. We are to understand by the word, therefore, fruit-bearing branches, those from which in due season the fruit would hang. Hence it is not palms of victory that we have before us, but the palm branches of the feast of Tabernacles, the most characteristic feature of that greatest festival of the year, when the last fruits, 'the wine and the oil' as well as 'the corn,' were ripe, and when the Messiah was expected to come to His temple. Hence also the articles before 'branches' and 'palm trees,' not to mark palm trees growing by the wayside, but the well-known palm branches so closely connected with the feast. With the idea of

14 even the King of Israel. And Jesus having found a
15 young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not,
daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting
16 on an ass's colt. These things understood not his dis-

this feast the Jews had been accustomed to associate the highest blessings of Messianic times, and at the moment, therefore, when they hail Jesus as the long expected Messiah and King, the thoughts of it naturally fill their minds.—**And went forth to meet him, and they cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, and, The King of Israel.** The words, thus uttered with loud shouts of joy, correspond to the action of which we have spoken. Those in the first clause of the quotation are taken from Ps. 118: 26, and are words which were undoubtedly used at the feast of Tabernacles. Whether we consider them in connection with their place in the psalm or with the typical meaning of the feast, they were peculiarly appropriate to the present moment. The psalm was acknowledged to be Messianic, and both psalm and feast celebrate the triumphant coming of Messiah to His house and people, when the gates of righteousness are opened and Israel goes in and praises the Lord (Ps. 118: 19). The Lord, too, appears in the psalm in precisely the same character as that in which we have Him here before us, that of one who has suffered and overcome (ver. 22). The appellation given to Jesus in the second clause, and probably to be regarded as a second cry, points onward to the prophecy of Zechariah (9: 9) quoted in ver. 15. Hosanna is a rendering into Greek letters of the Hebrew words, 'Save, we pray' (Ps. 118: 25).

Vers. 14, 15. Jesus 'found' the ass, having taken means to find it (comp. Matt. 21: 2; Mark 11: 1; Luke 19: 30; comp. also chap. 1: 43). It is a 'young' ass, expression being thus given to the fact that it had not been previously used for any burden (Mark 11: 2). The whole passage brings out a view of Jesus in this entry into Jerusalem that we may readily forget. We see at once the glory of the Saviour. He who thus approaches Jerusalem is a King, the King of Israel (ver. 14), the King of Zion (ver. 15): the progress is royal: the entry is triumphant. But the main thought of the Evangelist is that humiliation, suffering, and death characterize this King: He is a sacrifice: and in being a sacrifice His true glory lies. The change from 'Rejoice greatly' to 'Fear not' (no doubt made by the Evangelist himself, see 2: 17), may spring from his profound sense of the majesty of Jesus (Rev. 1: 17): there is fear to be dispelled before the joy of His presence can be felt. The context in Zechariah, however, suggests another sense. The King comes to defend His people; He comes 'having salvation:' let Zion fear no more. So understood, John's words contain the meaning of the whole passage quoted. The prayer 'Hosanna' is answered.

Ver. 16. What was it that the disciples did not understand at the time? The true application of the prophecy of Zechariah now pointed

ciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then
remembered they that these things were written of
17 him, and that they had done these things unto him.
The multitude therefore that was with him when he
called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from
18 the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude
went and met him, for that they heard that he

out? Certainly not. It was the events themselves now occurring that were dark to them. They were not seen in their true light as a magnifying, as a prefigurative glorifying, of a suffering Messiah,—were not seen to contain within them the great mystery of exaltation through and in the midst of suffering. For similar want of appreciation by the disciples of what was passing before them, comp. 2: 22, and note there. **But when Jesus was glorified**, etc. The ignorance of the disciples was corrected by experience. What they did not understand now, they understood when the resurrection and ascension had taken place. The light of that glorification shed light alike upon the sufferings and the partial glorifications of Jesus that had gone before.

Vers. 17, 18. These verses are not a returning to the story after a digression in ver. 16, nor a continuation of the narrative, as if the picture had not yet been complete. They are a recapitulation of two leading facts already mentioned, the first of which seems to be closely connected with the second—(1) that many of 'the Jews,' led to believe in Jesus by the miracle which they had seen (11: 45), became now, like the disciples, themselves His witnesses; (2) that 'the multitude,' although they had not seen the miracle, yet hearing of it, had also been led to faith and homage (12: 12–15). At the same time, however, there is an important and instructive difference between the two acts thus referred to. The first proceeds from those who had been 'with Him when He raised Lazarus from the dead;' the second from those who had not themselves been witnesses of the miracle, but had '*heard* that He had done this sign.' The difference corresponds precisely to that alluded to in chap. 20: 29; and it thus forms an interesting illustration of the manner in which, throughout all this Gospel, the Evangelist seizes upon those aspects of events that bring out the great principles of which his mind is full. The correspondence appears still further in this, that the homage of those who 'did not see' is that of the second picture which, as always, is climactic to the first (comp. 20: 29); for the impression produced upon the mind of John by the second act of homage is not due to the simple circumstance that this multitude 'went to meet' Jesus. It is due to the titles which they had ascribed to Him at ver. 13, the one expressing His peculiar Messianic distinction, the other rising to the highest point of Old Testament prophecy (comp. on 1: 49). It has only

19 had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, [1]Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after him.

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those that
21 went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and

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[1] Or, *ye behold.*

further to be noticed that the effects alluded to are connected with the miracle as a 'sign.' As such, embodying life in the midst of death, life triumphant over death, it draws out faith to a spectacle so glorious, to a Worker accomplishing so mighty a work.

Ver. 19. The exaggeration of their words illustrates the alarm and hopelessness of the Pharisees. The impression made is too great to permit them to look at the facts only as they are. The danger of the situation is enhanced by their fears, and they speak more strongly than even the occasion, striking as it was, demanded. It is at the same time highly probable that the Evangelist sees in their language one of those unconscious prophecies so frequently noticed in his Gospel. The second act of the twelfth chapter is over, and the humbled Redeemer is still the conqueror. The third act presents the same lesson in a still more striking light.

Ver. 20. **And there were some Greeks from among them that came up to worship at the feast.** A third illustration of homage paid to Jesus. The account is given by John alone. From ver. 36 we may perhaps infer that it was considerably later in the week than the event last recorded; but the want of any definite statement on the point, and the fact that the issue of the request is not recorded, show that the Evangelist occupies himself only with the idea of the scene. The persons spoken of are Greeks (not Greek-speaking Jews), therefore Gentile by birth, probably proselytes, certainly (as appears by 'from among' not 'among') sharers in the faith and purposes of the other pilgrims at the feast. They are part of those referred to in chap. 7: 35 and 10: 16. Still more, they are the earnest and first-fruits of that 'world' which the Pharisees have just spoken of as 'going after' Jesus.

Vers. 21, 22. **These came therefore to Philip, etc.** Why these Greeks should particularly address themselves to Philip; why Philip should be here described as 'from Bethsaida of Galilee;' why Philip should tell Andrew; and why Andrew, as appears from the peculiar mode in which the communication is mentioned, should have been the spokesman of the pair, are questions to which it is not easy to give a satisfactory reply. It may be that Philip was the first disciple whom they met; that the mention of his place of residence is simply for more complete identification of the man; that the bond of companionship between him and Andrew may have been close; and that Andrew,

22 asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip
cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and
23 Philip, and they tell Jesus. And Jesus answereth
them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man
24 should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die,
it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth

always one of the first four apostles mentioned in the apostolic lists, may have stood in nearer relation to Jesus than Philip, or perhaps have been the more ready speaker of the two. The more, however, the Gospel of John is studied, the less shall we be disposed to be content with these explanations, or to think that there was nothing further in the mind of a writer so much accustomed to see even in apparently accidental and trifling circumstances deeper meanings than those which at first strike the eye. Such a meaning he may have seen in the facts which he now, after so long an interval, recalls. It is worthy of notice that in chap. 6, at the feeding of the 5000, which has undoubtedly a symbolical as well as a literal meaning, not only are Philip and Andrew the only two disciples named, but they there play exactly the same part as in the present instance; for Philip is first appealed to but is perplexed, while Andrew draws from Jesus the solution of the difficulty. Thus also in the incident before us, John may have beheld an analogy to the same scene, an illustration of the fact that both Jews and Gentiles shall be conducted by the same path to the 'bread of life.' These hungering Greeks are like the hungering Jews when the loaves were multiplied, and those whose difficulties in the way of satisfying the latter were removed by the word of Jesus, are also those whose difficulties in the way of satisfying the former are removed by the same word.

Ver. 23. The glorification here spoken of must be that of chap. 13: 31, 32, and 17: 1, 5, the latter of which also follows a moment designated exactly as the present one,—'The hour is come.' But the 'glorification' of these passages consists in the full manifestation of Jesus when, all His labors and sufferings over, He shall be elevated, with the Father, to the possession and exercise of that power to carry out His work upon its widest scale which was now limited by the conditions of His earthly lot. Hence the bringing in of the Gentiles, though it does not constitute that glory, is immediately connected with it.

Ver. 24. **Verily, verily, I say unto you.** There is a general principle lying at the root of the glorification of the '*Son of man.*' This is now to be explained and illustrated.—**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth itself alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.** Absolute death, destruction of the principle of life, is not implied. The seed does not

25 much fruit. He that loveth his [1]life loseth it; and
he that hateth his [1]life in this world shall keep it unto
26 life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me;
and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if
any man serve me, him will the Father honour.

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[1] Or, *soul.*

actually die: its old covering dies that the germ of life within may spring up in higher forms of beauty, and with many grains instead of one. Such is the law of nature, and to this great law Jesus as 'Son of man' must conform: He does not simply lay down a rule for others; as representative of our humanity the rule must first find its application in Himself.

Ver. 25. **He that loveth his soul** [τὴν ψυχὴν] **loseth it; and he that hateth his soul in this world shall keep it unto life** [ζωὴν] **eternal.** The law of the physical world just spoken illustrates the law of the moral and spiritual world. 'Soul' is here the personality, the self, in man; yet not the self in the sense of selfishness, for selfishness must be destroyed not 'kept.' It is rather that which constitutes the man himself with his likings and dislikings, his loves and hatreds, his affections and desires. It is the law of the moral world then that he who so loves his soul loses it. By simply living for himself and without thought of others, he 'loses' that very thing which he desires to preserve and make happy. On the other hand, he that in this world 'hateth his soul,' his soul not brought into subjection to that law of love which is the law of God, and, so hating, denies and crucifies it in order that love may gain the mastery in him, —that man shall 'keep' it, shall keep it too unto the higher life which is not merely future, but which is even now filled with the Divine and deathless (comp. Luke 16: 26).

Ver. 26. **If any man serve me, let him follow me.** The words apply the law just spoken of as the law of nature and man, and therefore also as the law of Jesus, to every individual. The 'following' is neither general nor outward, but specific and inward,—a following in that path of suffering and sacrifice even to the cross, the thought of which was at the moment peculiarly present to the mind of Jesus (comp. 13: 36), and it supposes the possession of His spirit (comp. 8: 12). A special emphasis lies upon the first 'Me,' as if our Lord would say, 'If it be Me that any man would serve.'—**And where I am, there shall also my servant be,** in that glory to which I am immediately to be exalted (17: 24)—**If any one serve me, him will the Father honor.** 'Any one' Jesus says, for the thought of the universality of His salvation now fills His breast; and '*the* Father,' even He who will be to all His sons what he is to the Son. We ought not to pass these last two clauses without observing how, amidst all that equality of sonship which runs through

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?
Father, save me from this [1]hour. But for this cause
28 came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.
There came therefore a voice out of heaven, *saying*,
I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

[1] Or, *hour?*

this part of the Gospel, the wide distinction between the Son and the sons is still preserved. In that future home of which Jesus speaks He *is*, it corresponds to His nature to be there; they shall only be brought to share it: He, too, is the Master, they 'serve.'

Ver. 27. **Now is my soul troubled,** There is no want of connection between these words and the immediately preceding verses. The connection, on the contrary, is of the closest kind. Because this is the moment of highest exaltation in the contemplation of the universal triumph symbolized in the coming of the Greeks, it is also that when all the intensity of suffering by which the triumph is procured is most present to the mind of Jesus. The verb 'troubled' is the same as in 11: 33, 'He troubled Himself.'—**And what shall I say?** Not, What feelings shall I cherish at this hour? What mood of mind becomes the circumstances in which I am placed? but, How shall I find utterance for the emotions that now fill my breast?—**Father, save me out of this hour.** To understand these words interrogatively, 'Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?' as is done by many commentators, is to introduce a hesitation into the mind of Jesus which we may well believe never had place in it, and to give the utterance a sentimental turn at variance with the solemn scene; on the other hand, viewed as a direct prayer to His Heavenly Father, they are the exemplification in His own case of the law of ver. 25. Jesus prays that He may be spared the bitterness of this hour. Matt. 26: 39 shows that Jesus had the feeling—one perfectly free from sin—that would lead Him to escape suffering and death; but the higher law immediately comes in. He has the Father's will to do. To it He must yield His life, His self. Therefore He adds, **But for this cause** (that the Father's name may be glorified, ver. 28) **came I unto this hour.** This prayer, however, is not 'save me from' but 'save me out of this hour,'—not for freedom from suffering, but (comp. Heb. 5: 7; Acts 2: 31) for deliverance out of it. Such a prayer is as consistent with His knowledge of 'the glory that should follow' as is Matt. 26: 39 with Matt. 16: 21. But the very prayer for deliverance is checked. 'For this cause' (that He may be delivered out of the hour) 'came I unto this hour:' the object of the hour of suffering is to bring triumph. We must not miss the emphasis on the word 'Father;' it is not simply God's but the Father's glory that He desires.

Ver. 28. **Father, glorify thy name,** 'Let Thy glory shine

29 The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel
30 hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

forth in Thy name, in Thy character, as Father and in all that is involved in establishing Thy fatherly relation to men.'—**There came therefore a voice out of heaven, etc.** The answer is a voice from heaven which is supposed (ver. 29) by some to be thunder, by others to be that of an angel. Both these suppositions disclose the character of the voice. It was loud and terrible, a voice of awe and majesty. Such is always the meaning of thunder both in the Old Testament and the New (Ex. 19: 16; Job 26: 14; Ps. 104: 7; Rev. 4: 5; 8: 5; 11: 19; 14: 2; 19: 6). Such is the voice of an angel (Matt. 24: 31; 1 Thess. 4: 16; Rev. 5: 2). The mixed 'thunderings and voices,' too, of the Apocalypse are an instructive comment on this voice, while the connection that it has with judgment is clearly indicated by our Lord Himself in vers. 30, 31. If this was the *manner* of the voice, its *contents* must correspond, and it seems therefore altogether inappropriate to refer the first part of the words to the ministry of Jesus in Israel now drawing to its close, the second part to the approaching proclamation of salvation to the Gentiles. In reality these two things are one, and both of them are already ideally complete. The words rather express the unchangeableness of the purpose of Him 'who is and who was and is to come,' and intimate that the great work whereby God's name was to be especially glorified would certainly, as resolved on in eternity, be accomplished.

Ver. 29. That a real voice had been heard is obvious from the fact that the words are actually given by the Evangelist in ver. 28, and that some at least of the multitude imagined that an angel had *spoken.* It had not, however, been understood by all; and John's object in stating this appears to be his desire to bring still more clearly out the mysterious nature of the voice,—one the apprehension of which belonged to the higher regions of the spiritual life, and which was necessarily dark to those who had not entered into the Father's plans. Jesus understood it. The Evangelist did so too. But 'the multitude' felt only that God was there.

Ver. 30. **Jesus answered and said, Not for my sake hath this voice come, but for your sakes.** He needed not the voice, for He knew that He was one with the Father, and that He was carrying out the Father's will. But they might not comprehend His sufferings, the agony of soul they now beheld, the death immediately impending; and, therefore, to show them that in all this there was no defeat on His part, but only the carrying out of the eternal purpose of the Father, the words were spoken. Then Jesus rises to the thought of that victory which, at this the very moment of His deepest humiliation and suffering, He beheld accomplished.

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31 Now is [1]the judgement of this world: now shall the
32 prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be
lifted up [2]from the earth, will draw all men unto my-
33 self. But this he said, signifying by what manner of

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[1] Or, *a judgement.*

[2] Or, *out of.*

Ver. 31. **Now is there judgment of this world.** The 'now' is the 'now' of ver. 27, the 'hour' of ver. 23; and the primary thought to be taken into it is that of the suffering and death in the midst of which Jesus stood, and which in the purpose of God, and to the eye of faith, were so different from what they were to the eye of sense.—**Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.** Again we have the 'now' that we have already had. The moment is the same: the cause producing the effect the same. 'This world' culminates in its prince. The title meets us again in 16: 11, and, although with the omission of the 'this,' in chap. 14: 30. By it can only be understood Satan, whom, indeed, the Jews knew as the 'prince of the world' excluding Israel. Here there is no such exclusion; the 'world' is again used in the widest sense of the term. In its prince are concentrated the powers that come between man and God. But he 'shall be cast out,' that is out of the world which he has ruled, so that ideally he shall have no more power in it. The expression 'cast out' is very remarkable when compared with its use in other parts of this Gospel (6: 37; 9: 34, 35). It is excommunication from a holy community, or scene, or synagogue, or world, which is, and is to be, God's alone. The negative side of the victory of Jesus has been declared; we have now the positive.

Vers. 32, 33. **And I, if I be lifted on high out of the earth, will draw all men unto myself**, etc. 'Myself' is used in emphatic contrast with, and opposition to, the 'prince of this world.' To Himself Jesus will 'draw' men; and any difficulty connected with this is not to be met by weakening the force of the word 'draw,' but by taking into account the limitations implied in the context, and in the nature of the case. The lesson alike of the whole Gospel and of experience is that some *will* not be drawn. They resist and quench the light. They love and choose the darkness. In the same way the force of 'all men' must not be weakened, although we ought to keep in view the two thoughts which the context shows us to be prominent—(1) that not 'the prince of this world,' but Jesus Himself shall have the empire of the world; (2) that not Jews alone but Gentiles, some of whom had already been seeking Him, shall be drawn. 'All men,' however, is universal in its meaning. Jesus would not merely draw some, He would draw all; and if some are not saved, it is because they deliberately refuse to submit themselves to His influence. The condition and means of this drawing are the 'lifting on high of Jesus out of the earth.' What is this 'lifting on high'? The

34 death he should die. The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

word has already met us in 3: 14 and 8: 28; and in the first of these passages in particular we have seen that it must be referred to the crucifixion. The whole context of this verse demands, primarily at least, a similar reference. The thought of the death of Jesus is prominent throughout. Even when He receives the homage of Mary, of the multitude, of the Greeks, He has upon Him the stamp of death. It is thus too that in ver. 38 the Evangelist explains the expression; and his explanation is confirmed by the remarkable use of the preposition 'out of' instead of 'from.' That preposition is much more applicable to the crucifixion than the ascension, and its use seems to imply that simple separation from the earth satisfies the conditions that are in the mind of Jesus. At the same time the thought of glorification must surely be included in the 'lifting on high.' In the teaching of this Gospel, indeed, the facts of crucifixion and glorification go together, and cannot be separated from each other. The dying Redeemer is glorified through death: the glorified Redeemer died that He might be glorified. The crucifixion is the complete breaking of the bond to earth: it is the introduction of the full reign of spiritual and heavenly power.

Ver. 34. The 'multitude,' who are Jews not Greeks, have rightly understood the words of Jesus in ver. 32 to mean a lifting on high by death. But they have learned from the Scriptures (here, as in 10: 34, called 'the law')—probably from such passages as 2 Sam. 8: 13–15; Ps. 72, 89, 110; Isa. 9: 6, 7; Dan. 7: 14—that 'the Christ abideth for ever,' that, according to their interpretation, He should have a glorious and eternal reign on earth. There is thus an irreconcilable contradiction between the fate expected by Jesus and the claims which they might perhaps have otherwise allowed.—**Who is this Son of Man?** The words are not an honest inquiry who this Son of man can be, and how He can be the Christ. They are really a rejection of the claims of Jesus. 'Who is this? We have nothing and shall have nothing to do with Him.' The interpretation thus given is greatly confirmed by the fact that the words are immediately followed not by explanation, but by solemn warning on the part of Jesus (vers. 35, 36), and by the Evangelist's own reflections on the hardness and perversity of man (vers. 37–41); while, at the same time, it is in a high degree suitable to the place occupied by them in the Gospel. 'Son of man' had been the favorite designation by Jesus of Himself. How appropriate is it that, when finally rejected, He should be rejected in that character! Have we not here also another illustration of the Evangelist's love of commemorating instances, when, against themselves and as if under the guidance of an irresistible power, men

35 Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light [1]among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.
36 While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.

[1] Or, *in*.

were compelled to ascribe to Jesus in contempt epithets which, rightly understood, were His highest glory?

Ver. 35. Words of solemn warning that they had a day of grace granted them, but that it was now drawing to a close, and that, if they did not pass beyond all doubts to faith, they would be overtaken by darkness.—**Walk as ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not.** That is, 'Walk in accordance with the fact that the light now shines around you.'—**And he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.** If they do not thus walk, thus come to the light (3: 21), the darkness will overtake them; and instead of going to the glory to which Jesus 'goeth,' they will go blindly to destruction.

Ver. 36. **As ye have the light, believe in the light.** Nay, not only let them come to the light, but let them take a higher step and 'believe in' the light, that is, commit in trust their whole being to the light.—**That ye may become sons of light,**—light your father, the element of your being, and no darkness at all in you. Such are the last words of Jesus which the Evangelist, in describing His active ministry, has thought fit to record. How strikingly do they remind us of the opening of the Gospel, and bind apparently far distant parts of His work into one! In the Prologue we read of the Word that 'it shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not' (1: 5). Now that the Word has become incarnate, has lived, has suffered, has been condemned to die, and for what? that we believing in Him, embracing Him in a true communion, taking His life, His light, into ourselves, may also become sons of light, shining in the darkness, and the darkness overcoming us not.—**These things spake Jesus, and having gone away he was hidden from them.** In chap. 8: 59 we were told that 'Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.' Here, (as became the moment that closed His public ministry, the departure is more complete,—marked by a finality which had no existence then. It is supposed by many commentators that He went to Bethany, and it may have been so. But the fact to be mainly observed is the fresh illustration supplied by John's silence of the manner in which, to his mind, the ideal surpasses the historic interest. The departure itself and the consequent close of Israel's probation is the main point. All else passes out of view before the sad reflection upon the unbelief which Israel has exhibited.

## Chapter 12: 37–50.

## *Lamentation over the Unbelief of the Jews, and Summary of the Public Ministry of Jesus.*

These things spake Jesus, and he departed and [1]hid
37 himself from them. But though he had done so
many signs before them, yet they believed not on him:
38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled,
which he spake,

> Lord, who hath believed our report?
> And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

[1] Or, *was hidden from them.*

### *Lamentation over the Unbelief of the Jews, and Summary of the Public Ministry of Jesus*, vers. 37–50.

Contents.—The public ministry of Jesus has been brought to a close, and the moment has been marked by words the melancholy pathos of which can hardly be mistaken: 'Having gone away, He was hidden from them' (ver. 36). These words, applied in the first instance to the outward circumstances of the Saviour, receive now at the hands of the Evangelist all the depth of their meaning, when he gives us his last reflections on the hardness and unbelief displayed by Israel in rejecting the glorious self-manifestation of its Lord (vers. 37–43). After this we have in the second part of the section, closing the fourth and leading division of the Gospel, a short summary of that teaching of Jesus to which Israel had refused to listen (vers. 44–50).

Ver. 37. The words of chap. 1: 10, 11, seem to echo in our ears: 'He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own home, and His own accepted Him not.' All the particulars of the statement heighten the effect. In the original there is a certain degree of emphasis on 'He'—One so full of power and grace, so divine in majesty, so human in tenderness. Then it was 'signs' that He had wrought, not mere miracles, but things that were the very expression of the Son and in Him of the Father. These signs, too, had been 'so many' (see note on chap. 6: 2); for it is number, not greatness, that in our Gospel is always referred to in this word (chaps. 6: 9; 14: 9; 21: 11). And, once more, the signs had been wrought 'before them,' so that they could not be mistaken (comp. chap. 10: 4). Yet, notwithstanding all this, their unbelief had been continued, wilful, as constant as the call addressed to them.

Ver. 38. The quotation is from Isa. 53: 1. By 'report' we are to understand the burden of the prophet's message, the word as *heard* rather than as *spoken* (comp. 2 Sam. 4: 4 in the Hebrew; Rom. 10:

39 For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart;
Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart,

16; 1 Thess. 2: 13); and by 'arm of the Lord,' the manifestation of His power alike in the deliverance of His people and in the destruction of His enemies (Deut. 5: 15; Isa. 63: 5). The words 'that it might be fulfilled,' so frequently used by Matthew as he points out the harmony of each successive event with the Divine plan and counsel, here meet us for the first time in this Gospel. More is meant than what we commonly understand by the fulfilment of a prediction. That which in its principle and its partial realization connected itself with the events of which the inspired prophet directly spoke is here declared to be 'filled up,' to have received its complete accomplishment. By whom then, and in what circumstances, were the words of Isaiah originally spoken? We answer: By repentant Israel; by Israel after it has come to faith, and when it looks back sorrowfully upon the fact that the message of Jehovah's love, and the manifestations of His power, had been disregarded by the great body of the nation. In a similar spirit the Evangelist now looks back, seeing in the unbelief which rejected the Messiah Himself the 'fulfilment' of that unbelief which had long before rejected the Messianic message of the prophet. Israel was ever the same: 'As their fathers did, so did they' (Acts 7: 51); they 'filled up' the measure of their fathers (Matt. 23: 32). This is the explanation of what caused John so much astonishment and sorrow. But it is not all.

Vers. 39, 40. 'For this cause' does not refer so much to the words themselves of the preceding verse, as to that Divine plan which John sees that they express, and whose further progress, involving a judicial hardening of those who, as we have seen, had first hardened themselves, is expressed in the words that follow. The quotation is from Isa. 6: 9, 10, and the changes, especially in that from the commanding to the narrative form, are only such as the prophet himself would have made *had he taken up the position of our Evangelist*, and, at the close of his prophetic ministry, related what he had been made the instrument of effecting. Israel was so wilfully rejecting God in the prophet's days, that the moment for God's *judicial* treatment of His people had come. By him, therefore, God sent them a new message, that by their rejection of it the blinding of their eyes and the hardening of their hearts might be complete; that they might finally and conclusively reject the tidings through which, otherwise, Isaiah would have 'healed' them. Was not this exactly what had happened now? He in whom all the prophets of Israel were 'fulfilled' had

And should turn,
And I should heal them.
41 These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory;

come; and John sees Him uttering His mournful complaint over that wilful obstinacy of Israel which had provoked the judicial dealings of God, in the same language as that in which His servant of old, had he been speaking in the narrative form, would have spoken. Thus the words of the Lord to Isaiah (6: 9, 10), now quoted, describe the radical and unchanging condition of carnal Israel; and, as applied here, they mean that God had made the self-manifestation of Jesus the instrument of blinding and hardening those who had chosen unbelief. Thus also, it will be observed, God is the subject of 'hath blinded' and of 'hardened;' and 'I should heal them' must be understood of Jesus Himself. Hence, accordingly, the remarkable words of the next verse.

Ver. 41. **These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake concerning him.** When we remember that the chapter of Isaiah from which the quotation of vers. 39, 40 is taken is that in which the prophet sees the glory of the Lord, it may appear at first sight as if it were only the glorious vision there beheld by him that is here referred to. Yet it is impossible not to feel that this 41st verse, connected as it is in the closest manner with the words immediately preceding it, must really refer to that work of Christ to which the Evangelist had applied the prophet's words; and that 'His glory' must point to the glory of the self-manifestation of Jesus by means of the 'signs' of ver. 37 (comp. 2: 11). It is clear, therefore, that John intentionally unites that Jesus who is the 'I' in 'I shall heal them' with 'the Lord' spoken of in Isa. 6: 1, etc.,—unites, in short, the Incarnate Word as Messiah and Prophet and the Divine Word in His glory, 'sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and His train filling the temple.' But that is precisely the lesson of his whole Gospel; and it is this truth, so deeply imbedded in it, that gives unity and force to the passage we have been considering.—One point must still be briefly noticed. If the Jews were thus doomed to unbelief, where was their guilt? The answer is, that they are supposed to have *wilfully* rejected the revelation and grace of God *before* that point of their history is reached which is now in the eye both of prophet and Evangelist. Their whole previous training ought to have prepared them for receiving the claims of Jesus. They abused that training; they ceased to be 'of the truth;' they blinded themselves; and judicial blindness followed. It is only necessary to add that what we have spoken of as a 'previous' training may belong to the order of thought rather than to that of time. Almost at the very instant when the Almighty appeals to me by the presentation of Jesus, He may be appealing to me by His providence, His grace, the general working of His Spirit, so as to make me ready to receive Jesus; these

42 and he spake of him. Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [1] *it*, lest they should be put out of
43 the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.*
44 And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me,

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[1] Or, him.

* For "the glory of men . . . the glory of God" read "the glory *that is* of men . . . the glory *that is* of God."—*Am. Com.*

dealings I may so use that the *bent* of my character may at once appear, and if I am judicially doomed to darkness, the very sentence that dooms me is the consequence of my own folly and sin.

Ver. 42. **Nevertheless, even from among the rulers many believed in him.** The language which John used is general: as a nation Israel has rejected Jesus. But His mission has not been without effect on many individuals (comp. chaps. 1: 11, 12; 3: 32, 33); even from among the members of the Sanhedrin (see 7: 48) many believed in Him. Persons believed, belonging to a body in which the bitterest foes of Jesus bore rule; and greatness of unbelief is thus in some degree counterbalanced by greatness of faith.—**But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.** Although their faith was genuine, it needed strength and growth. It was not powerful enough to surmount the obstacles placed in its way by the resolution of chap. 9: 22; and it had not reached the point at which alone it could be said that, in 'leading out' its possessors after the true Shepherd, its complete victory was gained (chap. 10: 3, 4). On the prominence now given to the Pharisees among the enemies of Jesus, see note on chap. 7: 32.

Ver. 43. **Because they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.** It may seem at first sight as if these words were inconsistent with those of chap. 5: 44, and the apparent inconsistency is not to be removed either by giving to the word translated 'glory' its etymological signification 'opinion,' or by supposing that the faith of these rulers was not true. The solution of the difficulty is to be found in observing (1) that the 'glory' here referred to is that of vers. 23 and 41, a glory involving the unity of Jesus and His people. Let the latter identify themselves with the former, take up His cross, have part in His sufferings and death, 'confess' Him, and they shall also be partakers of His 'glory.' This is not exactly the same glory as that of chap. 5: 44.—(2) That the form of expression is not the same, here 'of God,' 'of men'—there 'from God,' the preposition used in the latter case leading more directly to the thought of glory offered by God, and deliberately rejected. The reflections of the Evangelist are at an end, and once more Jesus is introduced to us.

Ver. 44. **But Jesus cried and said.** In what sense are we to understand the cry and utterance about to be mentioned? Was it

45 believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me.
46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever be-

public or private? Or is it strictly speaking no utterance of Jesus at all, but only a summary by the Evangelist himself of the main points of that teaching of Jesus which he had recorded in the previous part of his Gospel? That it was not public is clear from the fact that the ministry had closed at ver. 36. That it was not private is equally clear, partly from the use of 'cried' (comp. 7: 28, 37), partly because the nature and tone of the words themselves are such as to suggest that Jesus is speaking to 'the Jews,' not to His disciples. The only supposition therefore is, that the passage contains an epitome or summary of the words of Jesus to the Jews. The words 'cried and said' are therefore equivalent to—This was the teaching of Jesus when He spake openly to the world. The Evangelist, however, does not give the summary in his own words, but (we can hardly doubt) makes use of actual sayings uttered by his Master at various times—sayings which for the most part combine and give forcible expression to truths which we have found stated in the discourses of this Gospel. There is in this section but little that is new; on the other hand, there is very little actual repetition of verses from earlier chapters. The words were spoken by Jesus; the selection is made by John.—**He that believeth in me, believeth not in me, but in him that sent me.** This is the first and almost the only place in this Gospel (see chap. 14: 1) in which the words 'believe in,' so constantly associated with our Lord (see chap. 2: 11), are used in reference to the Father. Once, indeed, in chap. 5: 24, the Authorized Version reads: 'believeth on Him that sent me;' but, as we have seen, this is a mistranslation. No words could more strikingly express what Jesus had accomplished for those who received Him: He had led them to the Father, and through Jesus they are now believers in God (1 Pet. 1: 21), 'throwing themselves with absolute trust' on God revealed in Christ. Hence the appropriateness of the words in this place, where the full effect of the mission of Jesus upon the many (ver. 40) and upon the few is traced. The form of expression here recalls chap. 7: 16; as there Jesus declares that the words which He speaks are words received from God, so here that the faith He has awakened and rendered possible is faith in God. In each relation He is Mediator between God and men.

Ver. 45. **And he that beholdeth me, beholdeth him that sent me.** In chap. 6: 40 (see note) we have the same combination as in these verses: 'He that beholdeth the Son and believeth in Him.' A little later the same thought finds fuller expression in words addressed to disciples (14: 9). Comp. 1: 18; 15: 24.

Ver. 46. **As light I have come into the world, that every one that believeth in me may not abide in the darkness.** Here we have the substance of the Saviour's last words to the multi-

lieveth on me may not abide in the darkness. And
47 if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I
judge him not: for I came not to judge the world,
48 but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and
receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him:
the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in
49 the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the

tude (vers. 35, 36) and the earlier sayings of 8: 12; 9: 5; but nowhere has it been as clearly taught that all are 'in the darkness' until by faith in Jesus they receive light. Comp. 3: 19 (Acts 26: 18; Col. 1: 13), and especially vers. 4, 5, in the Prologue. It is easy to trace a certain connection of thought in these verses, though from the nature of the case the connection is not always very close. The first two (44, 45) are occupied with the relation between the disciples of Jesus and the Father who sent Him; the next three (46, 47, 48), with the relation of Jesus to the world; the last two, with His relation to the Father. From beholding (ver. 45) to light is a natural transition; from this point each verse directly leads the way to that which follows it. The thought is at first expressed in the language of figure (ver. 46), then with studious plainness and simplicity.

Ver. 47. **And if any one shall have heard my sayings and have guarded them not.** It is necessary here to introduce an unusual word in the translation. To 'keep' the sayings or words of Jesus is a phrase which often meets us in this Gospel (8: 51, etc.): 'guard' is an uncommon word with the Evangelist, found only here and in ver. 25, and (in conjunction with 'keep') in chap. 17: 12. That the sayings may be kept and not lost from memory and life, they must be guarded with all care and *watchfully* observed. Comp. Matt. 7: 26; Luke 6: 49.—**I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.** Comp. 3: 17; 8: 15.

Ver. 48. From the 'forgetful hearer,' whose carelessness or indifference has let slip the words he should have 'guarded,' Jesus passes to the man who sets at nought both His word and Himself. Even to him that word shall come, but as a judge. As Moses was the accuser of the people (chap. 5: 45) because his word, though honored in profession, was disregarded in its spirit and design, so the very word of Jesus which they have rejected shall declare their doom. The word bore with it evidence that it was God's word: they heard not because they were not of God (8: 14, 47).

Ver. 49. **Because I spake not of myself; but the Father who sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.** With the first words compare 3: 34; 5: 19; 7: 16, 17; 8: 28; 14: 24. Of receiving a 'commandment' from the Father Jesus has spoken once only (chap. 10: 18), but in later chapters we have the same thought (14: 31;

Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.
50 And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.

## Chapter 13: 1–20.

### *The Foot-washing.*

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them [1]unto the

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[1] Or, *to the uttermost.*

15: 10), which indeed is implied wherever He has spoken of Himself as sent by the Father into the world. This commandment is the expression of the Divine plan for the salvation of the world (chap. 3: 14–16) The combination of 'say' and 'speak' in the last clause is remarkable: see the note on chap. 8: 43.

Ver. 50. The substance of the divine commandment is contained in the word of Jesus, and His word gives life eternal, His word is life (5: 24; 6: 63, 68).

### *The Foot-washing*, vers. 1–20.

Contents.—We here enter upon the fifth of those sections into which the Gospel is divided; and the section extends to the close of chap. 17. The scene and the circumstances of the actors in it are altogether different from what we have witnessed in chaps. 5 to 12. There is a transition from the 'world' and the 'Jews,' its leading representatives, to the circle of the most intimate friends of Jesus, from struggle to quietness and peace, from denunciation of sin to an outpouring of the most tender affection in act, discourse, and prayer. The consequence is that nowhere in the Gospel have we so full a revelation of the Father's purpose and work, of the Son's relation to it, of the great New Covenant gift of the Spirit, and of the duties, privileges, and hopes of that Church of Christ which, after He went away, was to take His place, as we find in these chapters. The first scene in the section is the Foot-washing. The subordinate parts are—(1) vers. 1-11; (2) vers. 12-20.

Ver. 1. **Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the full.** In this verse we have first a chronological notice, and next a description in three particulars of one side of the circumstances of the scene. (1) The chronological notice, 'before the feast of the Passover.' The Passover is

2 end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to

that mentioned in 12: 1, and more particularly described in 11: 55 as 'the Passover of the Jews.' It is significant that these last words, 'of the Jews,' are dropped in the expression before us. Jesus will partake of 'the Passover,' but not of 'the Passover of the Jews;' of the great national ordinance of Israel, but not of an ordinance the true spirit and meaning of which had perished; and which, as celebrated by 'the Jews,' had degenerated into an outward carnal form repulsive to the truly spiritual mind (comp. on 2: 13). The preposition 'before' is indeterminate, and is as suitable to an event happening *immediately*, as to one happening days, before. (2) The circumstances of one side of the scene, three in number. First, the leading person in it, 'Jesus, knowing that His hour was come,' etc. Certainly not '*although* He knew,' but *because* He knew that He was about to be delivered from the toil and suffering of the world, and to be reunited to the Father in the blessedness of the most intimate communion with Him (comp. on 1: 1). Second, the persons with whom He deals. They were 'His own;' and they were 'in the world,' amidst its dangers and difficulties and sorrows. Third, the feelings of the heart of Jesus,—love, not the mere love of friendship, but a solemn, deep, divine love Thus indeed He had always loved 'His own,' but His love now gains additional intensity; He loved them 'to the full.' This expression does not mean 'to the end,' for which another phrase is always used (Heb. 3: 6, 14; 6: 11; Rev. 2: 26). It is best explained by 1 Thess. 2: 16, 'to the uttermost:' the love of Jesus now reaches its highest point. It may be well to remind our readers that we shall now ever and again, until at least we reach the close of chap. 19, meet expressions having a bearing on the great controversy, not yet conclusively laid at rest, as to the day on which the Last Supper was eaten by Jesus and His disciples, as well as to that on which the crucifixion of Jesus took place. Here the first of these two points especially concerns us; and, without going into all the particulars, we would simply recall attention to the fact that the question is, 'Did Jesus eat the passover on the usual night, that appointed by the law, viz., the 14th of Nisan, or did He eat it on the evening of the *previous* day?' It will hardly be denied that the expressions here employed point most naturally to the regular, legal night. We have already said that with this view the word 'before' in this verse is perfectly consistent.*

Ver. 2. **And a supper being begun, the devil having already put it into his heart that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, should betray him.** It is important to notice the exact par-

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* [This is the correct view, held also by Lightfoot, Lange, Wieseler, Hengstenberg, Keil, Robinson, etc. Christ ate the legal passover on the 14th Nisan and was crucified on the 15th (a Friday). The first three Evangelists cannot have been mistaken on

3 betray him, *Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth

allelism of this verse to the preceding, both in the note of time, and in the circumstances of the scene. (1) The chronological notice, 'a supper being begun.' It was during the course of the supper, not after it was ended, that the events to be spoken of took place. That this 'supper' was not the 'feast' properly so called appears from the name 'a supper,' not 'the feast,' from ver. 29, where the 'feast' is not yet or only just begun, and from the absence of the article, which could hardly have been wanting had the word 'supper' taken up again the 'feast' of ver. 1. It was the preliminary meal at the close of which the 'feast' was celebrated. (2) The circumstances of the other side of the scene, three in number. First, the devil, who had 'already' plotted the destruction of Jesus, and had fixed on Judas as the instrument. Second, Judas Iscariot, the victim of the devil's wiles. Third, the feelings of the devil's heart,—treachery, hatred, at the point of intensity when what had been long determined on shall be fulfilled. The three particulars are in the sharpest contrast with those in ver. 1,—the devil with Jesus, Judas with 'His own,' treachery with love. Darkness is over against light, earth over against heaven, the lie over against the truth; and between these Jesus takes His way. What has been said ought to remove the objection felt by many to the translation which we have given of this verse. None will deny that it is the correct translation of the best established Greek text, but it is thought to be impossible to speak of the heart of Satan. The expression, it will be seen, springs from the Evangelist's mode of thought, as he seeks a contrast to the heart of Jesus (comp. the marginal rendering of Job 1: 8; 2: 3: 'Hast thou set thy heart on?').

Ver. 3. **Jesus knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God.** We have now that state of mind in Jesus which leads to the act about to be described. 'Knowing' takes up again the same word in ver. 1, and has the same meaning, 'because he knows.' The knowledge is summed up in three particulars—(1) That 'the Father had given all things into His hands;' the tense expressing no presentiment of coming power, but an act already past. (2) That 'He came forth from God;' the words expressing not His Divine original, which would have required another form of expression, but that He had left the presence of God as the 'Sent' of God. (3) That 'He goeth unto God,' as one who has executed His commission. The three clauses thus refer not to power or glory belonging to Jesus as the Son of God: they connect themselves with His work of redeeming love.

the date of so great an event, and it is much easier to harmonize John's statements with chronology (the 13th and 14th Nisan). See for particulars Lange on *Matthew and John*, Robinson, *Harmony*, and Schaff, *Church Hist.*, revised ed., vol. I.—P. S.]

4 from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper,
5 and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel
and girded himself. Then he poureth water into the
bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to
wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.
6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him,
7 Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and
said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but

Ver. 4. **He riseth from the supper, and layeth down his garments, and having taken a towel girded himself.** How wonderful the act when compared with the circumstances (mentioned in the previous verse) by which it is introduced! In the fullest consciousness of the glory of that work of redeeming love which He had undertaken, He who was in the 'form of God' assumed the 'form,' and did the work, of 'a servant,' a slave,—nay, felt that to do this was glory. What He does, too, is rendered all the more striking by the fact that the remarkable scene described in Luke 22: 24,—the strife among the disciples which should be the greatest,—may have just occurred. In contrast with that eager desire among His servants for superior station in the world, the Master 'riseth,' 'layeth down' His outer garments, and 'girdeth' Himself, becomes as 'he that serveth' (Luke 22: 27).

Ver. 5. It is impossible not to mark the minuteness with which each separate part of the wonderful work of condescension he would describe is here recorded by the Evangelist. According to the usages of the East, rendered necessary at once by the dusty nature of the roads, and the imperfect covering afforded by sandals, it was customary for the master of a house, when receiving guests, to provide them with water to wash their feet (Gen. 18: 4; 19: 2; Judg. 19: 21; Luke 7: 44). The act of washing would generally be performed by servants. Here Jesus, the Master of the feast, becomes Himself the servant.

Ver. 6. **He cometh therefore to Simon Peter: he saith unto Him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?** It is important to mark the strong emphasis belonging to 'thou' and 'my:' 'Lord, dost *thou* wash *my* feet? There may be hastiness and self-will on Peter's part, but surely there is also deep reverence for his Lord and a spirit of genuine humility. We must bear in mind that as yet he looks at the matter only with the outward eye, and that he can hardly be expected to think of the deeper spiritual significance which the act possesses.

Ver. 7. The Great Teacher now takes in hand the task of instructing the warm-hearted but impulsive disciple in the true nature of the act performed by Him, and His reference to the future prepares the way for the revelation to be given. 'Hereafter' certainly does not refer either to Pentecost or the eternal world. The remarkable tran-

8 thou shalt understand hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

sition in this verse from 'knowest' to 'learn,' and the fact that the last of these two words is again taken up in ver. 12 (where we translate perceive'), afford ground for the supposition that the 'hereafter' spoken of begins with the light there thrown by Jesus Himself upon what He does. Even then, however, it can hardly be confined to that moment. It is in the trying circumstances of the future, in the zealous discharge of the task that shall be his, and in the ripening of Christian experience, that Peter shall 'learn,' shall 'perceive' the full meaning of what he at present feels to be so incomprehensible. He will not only fully know what it is to have had his own feet washed by Jesus, until he shall have felt the need of constantly turning to Him in faith; and until, in the love ever renewed in the exercise of that faith, he too shall have washed the feet of others.

Ver. 8. Peter is too much amazed to comprehend at once the lesson of the precious words of Jesus. He does not even heed them; and his impulsiveness, checked for a moment, leads him to break over the barrier that has been opposed to it with greater force than before: 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.'—**Jesus answered him,** etc. Now, our Lord begins to unfold the true spiritual meaning of what He is about to do. We must carefully mark the words,—first, the word 'wash,' not 'cleanse' or 'bathe,' referring to the whole body, but simply 'wash,' referring to the act which Jesus has immediately in hand,—the washing of the feet alone; secondly, 'with me,' not 'in me,' referring, not to the entire dependence of the believer upon his Lord and his completeness in Him, but to his share along with Him in a work of self-sacrificing love, triumphant over the world and crowned with glory. If we keep these two points in view, it will be at once seen that the words of Jesus before us have little reference to any mere spirit of self-will, for which Peter must substitute the childlike disposition that alone can enter into the kingdom of heaven, and also that they relate as little to our first cleansing from sin in the atoning blood of Christ. They refer to something different from either of these two great truths, and express, what we shall have to explain more fully (on ver. 20), that unless Peter enters into the spirit of that self-sacrificing work of love which Jesus performs, makes that spirit his own spirit, sees the beauty and owns the glory of the Master's becoming the servant for His people's sake (comp. Matt. 20: 28; Luke 22: 24–27), and becomes in like manner ready to sacrifice himself if he may thereby help the humblest member of the flock of Christ, then he is going his own way, not the way of Jesus; he is choosing his own portion, not the portion of his Lord; he must be content to separate from One whom he loved with all his heart, and to have no more a part with Him either in His sufferings or His re-

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only,
10 but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him
He that is bathed needeth not [1]save to wash his feet,
but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.
11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore
said he, Ye are not all clean.

[1] Some ancient authorities omit *save* and *his feet*.

ward. It is this thought, even though it may be as yet imperfectly apprehended by the apostle, that leads to the sudden revulsion of feeling in the following verse.

Ver. 9. Peter sees that in whatever way the result may be produced, suffering Jesus to wash his feet will bring him nearer to his Master, will make him to be more 'with Him.' The thought of the hands and the head as the uncovered parts of the body naturally occurs to him; and his reasoning is that, if the washing of one part will give him a deeper interest in the Master whom he loved, much more will this be effected by the washing of more parts than one. To everything he will submit, so that it bring him nearer to Jesus and his reward.

Ver. 10. The ground of the figurative language hardly needs explanation: he who has just been cleansed in the bath has only further to wash his feet as he proceeds from the bath to the banquet in order that he may sit down there wholly clean. Peter's words had shown that he did not fully understand the application of the figure, and that he did not see that the washing of more than the feet, which had alone been in a position to contract defilement, implied that the first cleansing had not been so thorough as it really was. It was necessary, therefore, in furtherance of his training at this time, to remind him that in faith and love he had already been made completely one with Jesus, and that all now required was not an entire renewal of that first cleansing, as if men were to be born a third time as well as a second time, but a preserving of it in its completeness. This was to be effected by suffering Jesus now to cleanse away any stain that could be imparted by the work of the world, but no more. A right perception of the greatness of what Christ did for us when He first united us to Himself, is as necessary to a true following of His example of love and self-denial, as is a perception of the fact that, at every step of our progress, in every part of our continued work, we need to turn to Him for the spiritualizing of our earthly thoughts, the elevation of our earthly aims, and the pardon of our shortcomings and sins. Peter and the apostles ought not to forget this. They had all been truly united to Jesus except one; and there is sadness in the way in which the words are added, 'but not all.'

Ver. 11. **For he knew him that was betraying him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.** What a contrast to the

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his
garments, and [1]sat down again, he said unto them,
13 Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me
[2]Master, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.
14 If I then, the Lord and the [2]Master, have washed
your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.
15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should

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[1] Gr. *reclined.*

[2] Or, *Teacher.*

eleven do these words present: they, full of faith and love, 'clean;' Judas with his heart full of evil passions, at that very moment his treachery not a thing of the future, but of the present. And yet more! Jesus knew this. The eye that sees what is in man, saw what was in the heart of the traitor while he yet washed his feet. It may be asked, What is the import of the foot-washing in such a case? We can only answer, It is nothing but an outward rite. The complete bath must have been accepted, before the subsequent washing of the feet can bring its blessing to us, or be other than a carnal form.

Ver. 12. **When therefore he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and had sat down again, he said unto them, Perceive ye what I have done to you?** Again three particulars introduce the words of Jesus; and the frequent recurrence of this structure throughout these verses harmonizes well with the touching solemnity of the whole scene. Having washed the feet of the disciples, resumed His garments, and again taken His place at the table, Jesus proceeded to enforce the lesson of what He had done. He first awakens their attention by His question, and then proceeds.

Ver. 13. **Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well: for so I am.** It was in the full consciousness of the dignity belonging to Him (ver. 3) that Jesus had entered upon this scene. It is in a similar consciousness that He now urges its lesson. The word used for 'Master' is John's Greek rendering for the Hebrew 'Rabbi' (chap. 1:29; 20:16). No special meaning therefore, such as 'Teacher,' is to be given it.

Ver. 14. **If I therefore, etc.** The order of the titles which Jesus assumes to Himself is changed in this as compared with the preceding verse. The object appears to be to give prominence to that title of 'Lord' in the thought of which lay the strength of the obligation resting upon His disciples to do as He has done. They, then, were to wash one another's feet when He would no longer be beside them to do so; they could not bathe one another, make one another 'clean;' but this they could do in self-denying love and fellowship,—they could restore one another's failing faith and love by ever-renewed manifestations of that love to one another which, springing from the love of Jesus, leads back to Him.

Ver. 15. **For I gave you an example, that ye also should**

16 do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto
you, A [1]servant is not greater than his lord; neither
17 [2]one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye
know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.
18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I [3]have chosen:
but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth

[1] Gr. *bond-servant.* [2] Gr. *an apostle.* [3] Or, *chose.*

**do even as I did to you.** What the giver of a commission does may well be done by the servant to whom the commission is given. It is important to observe that the act spoken of is only that of 'washing one another's feet.'

Ver. 16. **Verily, verily, I say unto you, No servant is greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.** How often Jesus speaks of Himself in this gospel as the Sent' of God! It is impossible to dissociate this usage from the words here, so that the same word is applied to the disciple in reference to his Lord as is applied to the Lord Himself in reference to God (comp. 17: 18). The disciples are the 'sent,' taking the place of Him who was first 'sent' but is now gone to the Father.

Ver. 17. **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.** Simple as might appear the duty to which the disciples were called, Jesus knew that it was a hard and trying task. He connects therefore a promise of blessedness with the actual performance of the duty.

Ver. 18. **I speak not of you all.** At this point Jesus again turns to the thought of Judas, yet not with the view of simply repeating what He he had said at ver. 10. It is contemplation of the blessedness first spoken of that fills His mind, and pity for that disciple who was not only to separate himself from the others, but, in doing so, to lose their blessedness.—**I know whom I chose.** The choosing refers to election to the apostleship, not to eternal life (comp. 6: 70; 15: 16, 19). The precise object of the statement is more difficult to determine. The most probable explanation seems to be that our Lord would anticipate what could not fail to be afterwards a source of perplexity to the disciples. It will seem strange to them that a traitor should have been chosen to be one of their number; and they may even be tempted to think that, had Jesus known what He was doing, no such choice would have been made. Therefore, with much emphasis on the 'I,' he says, 'I know whom I chose. You may imagine that I have been deceived, but it is not so; I knew well what was to happen, and that it was a part of the purposes of God,'—**but, that the scriptures may be fulfilled. He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me.** The words are from Ps. 41: 9. As originally used they refer to the suffering righteous man, but the Psalmist is led to employ words which have their full meaning only as

19 [1]my bread lifted up his heel against me. From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that [2]I am *he*.
20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

[1] Many authorities read *his bread with me*.

[2] Or, *I am*.

applied to the ideal righteous one, that is, to Jesus; and Jesus now speaks them directly in His own person. As found here they are not a reproduction of the Septuagint, but are an original translation of the Hebrew. The figure may be taken from the tripping up of a runner in a race, or from the thought of kicking. The latter allusion is the more probable. The peculiar offensiveness of the conduct spoken of lies in the fact that the person guilty of it has 'eaten the bread' of him whom he injures, and has thus violated those laws of hospitality and friendship than which the East knew none more sacred.

Ver. 19. These words can hardly mean that Jesus would henceforward tell them events that were to happen in order that, when the events did happen, they might see that He had been a true prophet and might have their faith confirmed. He is here dealing with them as with persons who are to be sent forth to do His work in the world; and it is as if He would say, 'Because the moment of your work is come I put you in possession of what is to happen, I make you anticipate and foresee it, I give you the same knowledge of it that I have myself, in order that, when suffering comes, you may not lose faith by the shock, but may be strengthened in your progress towards a deeper and truer faith. My ever present knowledge corresponds to my ever present Divine existence, to the fact that I am (comp. on 8: 24). Your knowledge shall be to you a proof that it is indeed One who can say "I am" that is in you.' It is not so much of faith in Him as the Messiah that Jesus speaks: it is of faith in the Divine in Him, bestowed through Him upon themselves.

Ver. 20. The difficulty of tracing the connection of these words with the rest of our Lord's discourse at this time has been felt by all commentators. Let us observe that they are introduced by 'Verily, verily,' and that we are thus taken back to ver. 16 with the expectation that the thought here will closely correspond, although in a deepened form, to the thought there. There, however, the distinct reference had been to that work of lowly love which 'in the form of a servant' Jesus had just performed for His disciples. What, therefore, He had done for them, they are now to do for one another, and for the world. Laying aside all thought of earthly pre-eminence, seeking only the glory of God and not their own, they are to go out, like their Master, 'in the form of a servant,' and in a spirit of self-sacrificing love like His to be His representatives to men. As they do so, they will experience the same reception as He had done. Some will 'receive' them,—that is, will not merely view with favor their general work, but will accept them when they come, and because they come, to them in the *same spirit* as that which Jesus had displayed in the act which He had just performed towards them. Others, it is implied, will reject them; will accept indeed the outward service, the external rite; but yielding to the evil suggestions of Satan, and so proving themselves his children instead of the children of God, will cast away from them the precious truth of which the service and the rite were only the symbolical expression. Men will thus divide themselves into two classes which will take up towards the apostles doing the work of Jesus the same position as that which the eleven on the one hand, and Judas on the other, had now taken up towards Jesus Himself. It is important to keep this thought of Judas as well as of the others prominently in view in the verses before us. Just as vers. 1 and 3 constitute a parallel to ver. 19, and there is One behind Jesus who is received when Jesus is received (ver. 20), so ver. 2 constitutes a parallel to the implied thought of Judas, and there is one behind the traitor whose children the rejectors of Jesus, as he acts in the apostles, show themselves to be. Nor is this all; for, while the thought of which we speak binds the whole passage, vers. 1-20, into one, it also explains the apparently sudden transition to the powerful emotions stirred in the Redeemer's breast by the thought of Judas at ver. 21, as well as the emphatic 'Now' of ver. 31,—now, when the last who would resist that true glory which consists in self-sacrificing love has been expelled. The last clause of ver. 20 is explained by chap. 1: 12.

It is desirable to pause here for a moment, and to ask as to the real meaning of the wonderful scene, the details of which we have been considering. It is not a mere lesson of humility. The lesson is far deeper. It is the completing act of that great work of self-sacrificing love in which Jesus was engaged. He even includes in the thought of it the thought of the crucifixion now so near; and, as then He shall depart unto the Father, He affords now the most touching, the culminating illustration of the fact that 'the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' That is the very essence of His glory, a glory so different from the world, so different even from that upon which the thoughts of His disciples were yet fixed. Therefore He humbles Himself anew. Laying aside His glory He takes up His cross, not that He may justify disciples who are already His, who are 'clean,' but that He may bring them ever and again to Himself the source of all spiritual nourishment, and may wash away any fresh stains of defilement which they have contracted in their work in the world. That is His part. What is ours? It springs from the consideration that, exalted in glory, He really labors and suffers no more. His disciples take His place and carry on His work, constantly leading one another back to Him, and washing away those weaknesses of faith, those defects of love, which their work in the world brings with it. Thus they 'fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church' (Col. 1: 24); and it is thus only that, suffering with Him, they shall at last be glorified with Him' (ver. 8) in His glory.

## Chapter 13: 21–30.

### *The Expulsion of Judas Iscariot.*

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in the
spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say
22 unto you, that one of you shall betray me. The disciples
looked one on another, doubting of whom he

*The Expulsion of Judas Iscariot*, vers. 21–30.

Contents.—The leading idea of this section is the expulsion of Judas from the company of the disciples. We have already seen that before the chapter begins the world is shut out, and Jesus is to be alone with 'His own.' But Judas is of the world, the last remnant of it left in the apostolic company, the last particle, as it were, of the leaven that had to be removed with such scrupulous care from every Jewish house before the feast of the Passover. Before the true Christian Passover then can be celebrated, Judas must withdraw. Then only will the house be clean, the air be pure; and with no jarring element in their midst, Jesus will be able to pour forth all the fulness of His love towards those who are bound up with Him in the closest and most sacred fellowship.

Ver. 21. **When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and bare witness, and said, Verily, verily,** etc. All the expressions of the verse indicate how deeply the spirit of Jesus was moved, the 'troubled in spirit,' the 'bare witness,' the 'Verily, verily.' Compassion, however, is not the leading feature of His mind at present. It is rather horror and indignation at the thought that over against His glorious mission of love to the world, there should now appear in their utmost intensity the worldliness, the selfishness, and the sin that would fain defeat it all. Therefore He was 'troubled' (comp. on 11: 33; 12: 27), and troubled 'in spirit,' in the highest region of the spiritual life. Therefore He 'bare witness:' not simply were His words plain, as compared with His previously obscure intimations of the approaching treachery (vers. 10, 18), but He was now delivering a part of that mystery of the will of His Father which it was His mission to proclaim, and which announced the thickness of Satanic darkness no less than the brightness of heavenly light. And therefore also He said: 'Verily, verily;' so solemn, so awful, so full of deep and far-reaching meaning, was the fact about to be realized. The same three-fold statement shows the greatness of the impression made upon the mind of the Evangelist.—**I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me**; sad, painful words, but as yet not understood by the disciples.

Ver. 22. **The disciples looked one on another, in perplexity of whom he spake.** From the parallel passages of the earlier Gospels (Matt. 26: 22, etc.; Mark 14: 19; Luke 22: 23) we

23 spake. There was at the table reclining in Jesus'
24 bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon
Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him,
25 Tell *us* who it is of whom he speaketh. He leaning
back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him,
26 Lord, who is it? Jesus therefore answereth, He it
is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him.
So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth

learn that they expressed to one another in words. To John, hastening always to the main figure of the scene, it is enough to speak of their looks.

Ver. 23. **There was reclining at meat in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples.** It had been originally enjoined that the Passover should be eaten standing (Ex. 12: 11); but after the return from the captivity, the custom had been changed: the guests now reclined upon couches. The reason for the original injunction no longer existing, it had been permitted to fall aside; and our Lord recognized the propriety of the change. At this moment, indeed, the feast, properly so called, had not yet begun; but there is no reason to doubt that the attitude of reclining would not be changed when it did so.—**Whom Jesus loved.** The universal tradition of the Church, as well as the information afforded by the gospel itself, leave no doubt that this disciple was John himself.

Ver. 24. Peter, as usual the first to act, is the spokesman of the rest. Nothing is said to explain why either he or any other of the apostolic band should have supposed that John would know what they themselves were ignorant of. It may have arisen simply from their having witnessed many tokens of love and confidence on the part of Jesus towards him.

Ver. 25. **He leaning back thus on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?** Nothing can be more graphic than the account here given of the movement made by John. He had been reclining on the bosom of Jesus; he now throws back his head upon His breast, looking up into His face that he may ask his question. It is worthy of notice that this little act is fixed on by the beloved disciple in 21: 20 to characterize himself: not 'who also leaned,' but 'who also leaned back on his breast' at the supper. Perhaps, too, we may justly infer that the question was neither asked nor answered in undertones, but that all could hear.

Ver. 26. **Jesus therefore answereth, He it is for whom I shall dip the sop, and shall give it to him.** The use of the definite article with the word 'sop' can leave no doubt upon our minds that it is the well known sop of the Paschal Supper. The sauce in which it was dipped does not belong to the original institu-

27 it to Judas, *the son* of Simon Iscariot. And after the
sop, then entered Satan into him. Jesus therefore
28 saith unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now

tion, but had been introduced before the days of Christ, and was partaken of before the lamb was placed upon the table. At this point then we are at the beginning of the 'feast.' Two important questions meet us: In what spirit is the sop offered? Does Judas partake of it? As to the first of these, it was certainly more than a sign to point out Judas as the traitor. This particular sign is chosen in order even at the last moment to touch his heart. For this purpose Jesus departs from the ordinary custom at the feast, at which each guest dipped his own bread in the bitter sauce, and offers Judas a piece which He Himself had dipped. It was as if He would say: 'Thou art at my table, thou art my guest, I would fain have thee to be my friend; canst thou violate every rule of love and friendship?' The giving of the sop then is more than an index to the traitor. It is a final appeal to Judas which may yet soften his heart, but which, if it do not soften him, will only make him more hardened than before. The second question, Does Judas partake of the feast? is not distinctly answered by the Evangelist. We must probably answer in the negative, because—(1) The 'feast' was only now beginning. (2) The drift of the passage, and indeed of the whole of this section of the Gospel, leads to the conclusion that he did not. This view seems also to find confirmation from the words of 1 John 2: 19, which appear to take their form from the memory of the scene before us. Thus looked at, the going out of Judas is the token that he did not belong to the number of the disciples, and that he could not share in that expression of communion with Jesus now to be enjoyed.—**When therefore he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot.** For the name Simon Iscariot, comp. 6: 71. That the name Iscariot belongs to the father as well as the son, confirms the idea that the meaning is the 'Man of Kerioth' (Josh. 15: 25).

Ver. 27. **And after the sop then Satan entered into him.** After the sop had been given, Satan took such full possession of the traitor, that he is no longer only Judas, but one possessed by Satan. —**Jesus therefore saith unto him, That thou doest, do more quickly.** Judas may now be addressed as 'doing' what he was to do. It was too late to expect any change. Mercy, grace, offered to the last, have been to the last rejected. The sin must be committed now. Let him therefore not stay, as in all probability he would have wished to partake of the feast; let him be even more active than he is inclined to be; Jesus not only desires to be alone with His true disciples, but He is eager to take that last step which is now at hand; He is 'straitened' until His 'baptism is accomplished' (Luke 12: 50).

Ver. 28. **No one of those reclining at meat perceived for**

no man at the table knew for what intent he spake
29 this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had
the [1]bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things
we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give

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[1] Or, *box.*

**what intent he said it unto him.** From these words the inference is generally drawn that the conversation between Jesus and John must have been in an undertone; otherwise the disciples would have known the meaning of what had been said. The inference is hardly warranted. Even although they now knew that he was to betray his Master, they might be so ignorant of all the steps he was to take for that end, that they could not attach a correct idea to the words addressed to him. And they did not.

Ver. 29. On the 'bag' here spoken of, see on 12: 6. The first supposition made, that Judas might have gone out to purchase things needed 'for the feast,' is a proof that the feast itself had not begun, or was only beginning. It is important to observe the word 'feast.' It is that of ver. 1, and it shows that the disciples expected to partake of the *Paschal Supper* with Jesus. This expectation the Evangelist would in all probability not have communicated to us as he has done had he not known it to be correct. He knows that Jesus partook of 'the feast;' that what He did not partake of was the 'Passover of the Jews' (comp. on ver. 1). The words, too, are much more reconcilable with the idea that the feast was just about to be partaken of, than that it was to be eaten twenty-four hours afterwards. On the latter supposition, the 'more quickly' loses all its meaning. On the former retains its force. The expression here employed supplies therefore a powerful argument for the supposition that the evening on which Jesus and His disciples were thus gathered together was that of the Paschal Supper. It has indeed been urged that, if the Supper took place on the evening of the 14th,—according to sacred calculation, the beginning of the 15th,—such purchases would have been illegal and impossible, the 15th possessing all the sanctity of a Sabbath. This, however, is hardly a fair representation of the case. There are clear indications both in Scripture (Ex. 12: 16: Lev. 23: 7; Luke 23: 56) and in the Mishna, that a difference was made between these two days in respect of sanctity, the preparation of food, for example, being expressly allowed on the latter of the two. A rabbinical provision, also, for the procuring of the Paschal lamb when the eve of the Passover fell on the Sabbath, is a proof that no difficulty was experienced on the point when the two days did not coincide (Mishna, treatise *Sabbath*). The second supposition of the disciples points to the same conclusion. They thought that Judas was to give something to the poor; and that it was to be given 'more quickly.' This could hardly be mere general charity to the poor. The time was not very suitable for the exercise of such charity, and there could be no call

30 something to the poor. He then having received the sop went out straightway: and it was night.

for its being given at once. We are compelled therefore to think not of charity in general, but of that peculiar aid which, in conformity with the law (Deut. 16: 14), was to be given at the Passover to 'the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow,' to enable them also to rejoice. Such an interpretation of the words of Jesus on the part of the disciples corresponds much better with the supposition that the feast was about at this moment to be celebrated than that it was to be so the following night.

Ver. 30. **He therefore having received the sop went immediately out.** Again nothing is said of the sop's being eaten.—**And it was night.** It is impossible to mistake the symbolic meaning of these words, which thus becomes important as illustrating the general character of the thought and style of the Evangelist. They illustrate, no doubt, the minute accuracy of the narrative, and the fact that it is that of an eye-witness, upon whose memory the events witnessed by him had made a profound impression. But they certainly do more. In the darkness of the night in which Judas went out the Evangelist sees the symbol of the darkness of his deed of treachery.

[Dr. Westcott on the choice of Judas (Com. on John, p. 199): "There are two groups of explanations of the choice of Judas. The first group regards the choice from the side of the divine counsel; the second from the side of the human call.

"1. It is said he was chosen in obedience to God's will in order that he might betray Christ; or, to represent the same conception from another point of view, in order that the redemption might be accomplished through his act.

"2. It is said again by some that Christ in making His choice of Judas did not read the inmost depths and issues of his character; and by others that seeing all distinctly even to the end He kept him near to Himself as one trusted equally with the others of the twelve.

"Both these forms of explanation involve partial solutions of infinite problems.

"The question raised by the second group leads us at once to the final mystery of divine Providence. This, as far as we can represent it to ourselves, deals with general results and not with individual wills.

"The question raised by the second group leads us at once to the final mystery of the union of perfect divinity and humanity in the One Person of the Lord. And here the records of the Gospel lead us to believe that the Lord had perfect human knowledge realized in a human way, and therefore limited in some sense, and separable in consciousness from His perfect divine omniscience. He knew the thoughts of men absolutely in their manifold possibilities, and yet, as man, not in their actual future manifestations.

"These two final mysteries are not created by the fact that Judas was chosen by Christ among the twelve. They really underlie all religious life, and indeed all finite life. For finite being includes the possibility of sin, and the possibility of fellowship between the creator and the creature.

"Thus we may be content to have this concrete mystery as an example—the most terrible example—of the issues of the two fundamental mysteries of human existence."—P. S.]

## CHAPTER 13: 31—14: 31.

### *Jesus, alone with His Disciples, begins His Last Consolatory Discourse.*

31 When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now

### *Jesus, alone with His Disciples, begins His Last Consolatory Discourse,* vers. 31; 14: 31.

CONTENTS.—Judas has now gone out; Jesus is alone with the dsiciples whom He loved; and the last disturbing element has been removed from the midst of the little company. But the hour is come when the servants must be left without the immediate presence of their Master, and when they are to take that place, amidst the trials of the world, which He was about to leave for the immediate presence of the Father. It is the moment, therefore, for the Redeemer to pour forth all the inmost feelings of His soul on their behalf; and He does this in the discourse extending to the close of chap. 16, and in the intercessory prayer of chap. 17. We shall mistake the object of these chapters, however, if we suppose that they are intended mainly to console: they are still more to instruct and train those by whom the work of Christ in the world is to be carried on. The subordinate parts of the section before us are—(1) chap. 13: 31-35; (2) vers. 36-38; (3) chap. 14: 1-4; (4) vers. 5-7; (5) vers. 8-11; (6) vers. 12-21; (7) vers. 22-24; (8) vers. 25-31.

[We enter here upon the Holy of the holies of the Gospel history. The farewell discourses of our Lord, chap. 13: 31 to 17: 26 are unique even in this unique Gospel of John who was nearest the heart of Jesus and best qualified to drink in those words of instruction and comfort before the great sacrifice on the cross. Lange calls them "the most mysterious and the most holy of all the sayings of Christ, and a spiritual ante-celebration of His own glorification and that of His people in the new celestial life opened up by His death and resurrection." The parting song and blessing of Moses (Deut chaps. 32 and 33), the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the evangelist of the prophets, and the farewell address of Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts. 20: 17-36) bear a remote resemblance. We may also compare these last discourses in John to the Lord's eschatological discourses in the Synoptists (Matt. chap. 24; Mark chap. 13; Luke chap. 21): in John the Lord revealed the inner consummation of His work and the spiritual revolution to be accomplished; in the Synoptists he prophesied the overthrow of the theocracy and the outward establishment of His kingdom. Such an evening as the 14th Nisan in the year of the crucifixion occurred only once in the world's history: the full meaning of eternity was condensed into a few hours. The last words of our Lord to His eleven disciples combine the deepest emotion with serene repose; they are unutterably solemn, weighty, and comforting; they seem to sound directly from heaven, and they lift the reader high above time and space. We have here more than words, we have things, verities, acts of infinite love going out from God and going into the hearts of men. The main ideas are: I in the Father: the Father in Me; I in the believer: the believer in Me; I came from My Father in heaven: I fulfilled His will on earth; I now return to My Father, and prepare a place for my disciples in the many mansions of my Father's house that they may be where I am and share my glory.—P. S.]

[1]is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in
32 him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and

[1] Or, *was.*

Vers. 31, 32. In the going out of Judas Jesus sees the disappearance of the last trace of the world from His presence. It is the token to Him, therefore, that the struggle is past, that the victory is won, that the moment of His glorification has arrived. To the eye of sense, indeed, it seems as if at that instant the powers of darkness triumphed. But that was only the outward aspect of the events now to be consummated. We are on the verge of the 'lifting on high;' and in what the world thinks shame there really begins the brightest manifestation of the 'glory' both of the Son and of the Father. Hence the emphatic 'Now' with which Jesus introduces His words. The 'glorifying' spoken of in the first two sentences is not to be distinguished from that of the last two, as if the former were the glory of suffering by which Jesus glorified the Father, the latter that of reward by which the Father glorified Him. It is throughout the same glory that is in view, and that not an outward but an inward glory; although the word 'glorify' implies that what had been for a time veiled, obscured, is now made manifest in the brightness which is its true and proper characteristic. The glory spoken of is that of Sonship, the glory belonging to the Son as the absolutely perfect expression of the Father, and especially of that love of the Father which is the essential element of the Father's being. This expression had been found in the Son, not only throughout the eternity preceding the foundation of the world, but also after He became Son of man; and it is to be particularly observed that it is of the glorifying of the 'Son of man' that Jesus speaks in the words before us. His life on earth, not less than His previous life in heaven, had been the manifestation of the Father's love. But its 'glory' had not been seen. The world's idea of glory was altogether different; it had misunderstood and persecuted, and was about to crucify, Him whose life of lowly and self-denying service in love had been the highest and most glorious expression of the love of God to sinful men. This had been the cloud obscuring the 'glory.' But 'now,' when the struggle was over,—when, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, the 'lifting on high out of the earth' (comp. on chap. 12: 32), the resurrection, the ascension, and the bestowal of the Spirit established the triumph of Jesus,—the cloud was rolled away, and the glory always in Him, but hidden for a time, was to shine forth with an effulgence that all, though some unwillingly, should own. In this respect the 'Son of man' is 'now glorified.' Thus, also, 'God is glorified in Him;' because it is seen that even all the humiliation and sufferings of His earthly state, flowing as they did from love, the expression as they were of love, are the manifestations of the love of God. Nor is this all, for 'God shall glorify Him *in Himself;*' that is, shall bring out before the whole uni-

33 straightway shall he glorify him. Little children,
yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me:
and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot
34 come; so now I say unto you. A new commandment
I give unto you, that ye love one another; [1]even as I
35 have loved you, that ye also love one another. By

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[1] Or, *even as I loved you, that ye also may love one another.*

verse of being that the lowly, the crucified, Son of man is 'in Himself,' one with Him, His Beloved in whom His soul is well pleased (Isa. 42: 1; Matt. 12: 18). Finally God will do this 'straightway,' for the moment of death, of resurrection, and of all that followed, is at hand. Can we fail to understand the triumphant 'Now' of Jesus at the very instant when Judas was on his way to complete his treachery? But if there be triumph for Himself, what of His disciples?

Ver. 33. **Little children, yet a little while I am with you.** For them there is separation from Him, and the thought of its nearness lends more than ordinary tenderness to the words of Jesus. He calls them 'little children,' a term found nowhere in the New Testament, except here and in the First Epistle of John (chap. 2: 1, 12, 28; 3: 7, 18; 4: 4; 5: 21); for the more probable reading of Gal. 4: 19 is simply 'children.'—**Ye shall seek me: and even as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go away, ye cannot come: so now I say to you.** These words had been spoken to the Jews at chaps. 7: 34; 8: 21. They are now addressed to beloved disciples. Yet we are probably to seek for no other basis of the common thought than this, that the 'going away' of Jesus involved His separation from the community of human life, from friends, therefore no less than foes. The desolate state in which the disciples would thus be left, and, not less than this, the greater responsibility that would then rest upon them to carry out the work of Jesus, prepare the way for the words that follow.

Ver. 34. The 'new commandment' is love, such love as Jesus had Himself exhibited, and as had been His 'glory' (ver. 34); and this love to one another they would need, that in an evil world they might be to one another sources of strength and comfort. It is again the lesson of the foot-washing; though here it appears not so much in the form of general love to all men as of that specific love which can only be exercised towards the members of the body of Christ. By 'commandment' is meant not a definite precept, but rather a sphere of life in which the disciples are to walk (chaps. 10: 18; 12: 50); and it is this, rather than the character or quality of the love, that makes the commandment 'new.' The whole life of Jesus had been love; the new life of His disciples, as that of those in Him, was to be love also. Out of Him is selfishness; in Him, and in Him alone, we love.

Ver. 35. **By this shall all men know that ye are disciples** this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.
37 Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee
38 even now? I will lay down my life for thee. Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me?

**of mine, if ye have love one with another.** The expression 'disciples of mine,' seems to show that the meaning is not exhausted by the thought of that language so often quoted in connection with it, 'Behold how these Christians love one another.' It directs our thoughts, not to the disciples only, but to Jesus Himself. He was love: in the love of the Christian community, the love of its members 'with' one another, it was to be seen not merely what they were, but what He was, and more particularly that He was love. Thus, then, the disciples have their great charge committed to them,—to be in the season now at hand what He had been who had washed their feet.

Ver. 36. **Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou away?** Peter has not been able to apprehend aright the truths of which Jesus has been speaking. We need not wonder at it; and, had he understood them fully, there would have been less necessity either for the instructions that follow or for the discipline of his fall. As it is, thinking only of himself and his fellow-disciples, failing to see the greatness of the charge that would be committed to them when Jesus went away, and not yet trained as he will be, he turns to the thought of the separation spoken of in ver. 33, and asks whither his Lord goeth. No direct answer is given to the question. Peter must have known his work and done it before he could have properly comprehended the answer, had it been given; for a disciple's reward stands in such a relation to his work, that without a knowledge of the latter he could have no true knowledge of the former. Therefore it is that he is told that the time is not come for his following his Lord. He shall follow Him afterwards; follow Him in shame, in humiliation, to the cross, to the life beyond the grave: then shall he know.

Ver. 37. Peter sees that in the words, 'Thou canst not follow me now,' there lies the meaning that he is not yet morally prepared for following Jesus. His self-confidence is hurt by the suggestion; and not in devotion only, but in too high an estimate of his own readiness to meet every trial for the sake of the Master whom he loved, he cries out that he is ready to follow Him 'even now,'—nay, that he is ready to lay down his life for Him. Such want of self-knowledge must be corrected.

Ver. 38. For a similar repetition of Peter's own words in the answer of Jesus, comp. 21: 17 and the commentary. The words of

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.

1 Let not your heart be troubled: [1] ye believe in God,

[1] Or, *believe in God.* [Let marg.[1] and the text exchange places.—*Am. Com.*]

Jesus fix with solemn emphasis His disciple's attention on what He Himself had said.

Before we pass on, it may be well to ask at what point in these chapters we are to place the institution of the Supper. The point has been very variously fixed: at the beginning of chap. 13, at the end of chap. 14, at the end of chap. 13, between vers. 30 and 31, vers. 32 and 33, in the midst of ver. 34 of the present chapter. But these suppositions are attended with more or less improbability. We have already seen (in ver. 26) that 'the feast,' with the institution of which the Supper was most closely connected, was then beginning; but there is reason to think that Judas did not actually partake of it. If so, the natural inference is that it was completed between vers. 30 and 31, immediately after the traitor had gone out. The objection to this view, that the words of ver. 31 follow too closely upon ver. 30 to permit us to think that time was occupied between the two verses, is less weighty than at first appears. The words would follow with great appropriateness the giving of the cup which was the 'new covenant in the *blood* of Jesus;' and the word 'therefore' of ver. 31 does not necessarily imply that Jesus spoke at that moment, but only that the thoughts awakened by the departure of Judas must have remained in all their freshness when ver. 31 was uttered. This they would do even although the giving of the cup intervened, because that cup expressed in the most solemn form the exclusive intimacy of communion which now existed between Jesus and His disciples, and the existence of which is presupposed in vers. 34, 35 and 36. If this explanation is not accepted, there seems no valid reason why the institution should not be placed between vers. 35 and 36. The latter of these need not follow the former at once. The words 'I go away' (ver. 33), once uttered, would linger in the minds of those present as the one thought demanding explanation; and 'This do in *remembrance* of me' would deepen it.

CHAP. 14, ver. 1. **Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.** No separation ought to be made between this chapter and the last section of chap. 13, for the place, the circumstances, and the object of the discourse here entered on are the same as there. The dominating thought of all is that of chap. 13: 31,—that the time is come when a full revelation is to be made of the 'glory' of the Son of man in the Father, and of the Father in Him; when it shall be seen that the 'going away' of Jesus to the Father not only contains in it what swallows up all the humiliation of His earthly lot, but is the great proof and illustration of that union of Himself with the Father in love, the manifestation of which 'glorifies' both the Father and the Son. To such a manifestation, then, it is evident that the 'going away' of Jesus was *necessary:* He must in His earthly form be separated from His disciples, that His glory may be revealed not only to those who had the spiritual eye, but to the world (chaps. 16:

2 believe also in me. In my Father's house are many [1]mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you;

[1] Or, *abiding-places.*

10; 17: 21). While however separation must thus take place, it is, on the other hand, the object of our Lord to show that it was really no separation,—that He does not 'go away' in the carnal sense understood by Peter in 13: 36, but will ever be with His disciples in an abiding union and communion of spirit, (comp. the interesting parallel in 20: 17). The 'trouble' spoken of in the words now before us is not that of mere sorrow; it is rather that which Jesns had Himself experienced (see 12: 27) when the prospect of His sufferings rose immediately before Him. It is 'trouble' from the opposition of the world while they carry on their work of love; but 'trouble' which at the same time passes into the heart, and leads to the conflict of all those feelings of anxiety, perplexity, fear and sorrow, which make the heart like a 'troubled sea' that the Divine voice 'Peace, be still!' alone can calm. The foundation of all peace comes first, and the word 'believe' must be taken in the same way in both clauses of the statement. To understand it differently in the two would give, either to faith in God or to faith in Jesus, an independent existence inconsistent with the general teaching of this Gospel. We must, therefore, either translate, 'Ye believe in God, ye believe also in me,' or, 'Believe in God, believe also in me;' the hortatory form of 'Let not your heart be troubled' and of the whole discourse makes the latter probable. Yet, as the disciples already believed, the exhortation must have reference not to the formation, but to the deepening and constant exercise of that faith, the object of which is really one—God in Jesus. Thus also we may understand why faith in God is mentioned first, and not second, as in 12: 44. It is the highest act of faith that is referred to,—faith, no doubt, in God through Jesus, but faith in Him as the ultimate Guide of all that happens. It is the evolution of the Divine plan that they have to do with; therefore let them believe in 'God.' The order of the words in the two clauses is different, 'God' following, but 'me' preceding, its verb. The effect is to bring 'in God' and 'in me' into the closest possible connection.

Ver. 2. **In my Father's house are many places of abode: if it were not so, I would have told you; because I go to prepare a place for you.** All the substantives here used—'house,' 'places of abode,' 'place'—are full of meaning. The first is not the material building, but the building as occupied by its inmates; the second, used in the New Testament only in this verse and in ver. 23, is connected with the characteristic 'abide' of our Gospel; and the third embodies the idea of something fixed and definite—something that we may call our own (comp. 11: 48). But the full force and beauty of the words are only understood when we look at them in a light different from that in which they are generally regarded. For

3 for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be

'my Father's house' does not mean heaven as distinguished from earth, nor are the 'abiding places' confined to the world to come. Earth as well as heaven is to the eye of faith a part of that 'house:' 'abiding places' are here as well as there. The universe, in short, is presented to us by our Lord as one 'house' over which the Father rules, having 'many' apartments, some on this side, others on the other side, the grave. In one of these the believer dwells now, and the Father and the Son come unto him, and make their abode with him (ver. 23): in another of them he will dwell hereafter. When, therefore, Jesus 'goes away,' it is not to a strange land, it is only to another chamber of the one house of the Father: and thus 'many' is not to be understood in the sense of variety,—of different degrees of happiness and glory provided for different persons. The main thought is that wherever Jesus is, wherever we are, we are all in the Father's house: surely such separation is no real separation. Had not this been the true nature of the case,—had it not been essentially involved in the mission of Jesus that His disciples, once united to Him, could never be separated from Him, He would 'have told' them. His teaching would have been entirely different from what it had been; but, because wherever He was there He would prepare a place for them also, He had not thought it necessary till now to speak either of being separated or of being united again. It will thus be seen that the words beginning with 'because' are to be connected with those going immediately before, and not with the earlier part of the verse.

Ver. 3. All that has preceded these words has rested upon the idea that, although Jesus is now 'going away' to the Father, He is not really forsaking His disciples. Even when in one sense separated from them, in another He will still be with them; and this latter presence will in due time, when they like Him have accomplished their work, be followed by their receiving again that joy of His immediate presence which they are now to lose. This double thought seems to explain the remarkable use of two different tenses of the verb in the second clause of the verse,—'I come,' 'I will receive.' 'He is' wherever His people are: they 'shall be,' when their toils are over, wherever He is (comp. 12: 26). The Second Coming of the Lord is not, therefore, resolved by these words into a merely spiritual presence in which He shall be always with His people. The true light in which to look at that great fact is as the *manifestation* of a presence never far away from us (comp. ver. 18). Our Lord is always with us, though (as we have yet to see) it is in the power of the Spirit that He is now. He will again Himself, in His own person, be with us, and we with Him, when our work is 'finished.' Observe also the change of order in the original in the case of the words 'I am' and

4 also. [1]And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas
5 saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest;
6 how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am
the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh

[1] Many ancient authorities read *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

'ye may be,' the effect being to bring the 'I' and the 'ye' into the closest juxtaposition (comp. on ver. 1).

Ver. 4. **And whither I go away ye know the way.** These words convey to the disciples the assurance that they already had the pledge and earnest of all that Jesus had spoken of; for their interpretation depends on the same principle as that formerly applied at chap. 4: 32. To 'know' is not merely to know of; it is to have inward experience of. As, therefore, 'whither I go' is the Father's presence; as Jesus is the way to the Father; and as they have experimental knowledge of Him, they 'know the way.'

Ver. 5. **Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest away; how do we know the way?** In ver. 4, Jesus had spoken of 'going away,'—not of 'going,' as in ver. 3. The idea of separation is thus again brought prominently forward, and Thomas is overborne by the thought of it (comp 11: 16). His discouragement, which blinds his eyes, is uttered in the words before us.

Ver. 6. **I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** The three terms here used must not be taken as expressing three independent thoughts; still less can we fuse them into one, as if the meaning were, 'I am the true way of life.' It is evident, both from what precedes and from what follows, that the emphasis is on 'way,' and that the two other terms are in some sense additional and explicative. But in what sense? Let us notice that the thought of the Father is the leading thought of the previous verses of the chapter, and that in ver. 7 the knowledge of the Father is the great end to be attained; let us further observe that 'truth' and 'life' are precisely the two constituent elements of that knowledge, the one that upon which it rests, the other that in which it issues; and we shall see that Jesus adds these two designations of Himself to the first, because they express the contents, the substance, of that in which the 'way' consists. The Father is 'the truth,' 'the life:' Jesus is the revelation of these to men: because He is so He is 'the way;' and because He only is so, He is the only way to the Father. We must beware, however, of the supposition that the 'life' thus spoken of is only life to us in a future world. It is life now in that ever-ascending cycle of experience in which the believer passes from one stage to another of 'truth,' and thus from one stage to another of corresponding 'life.' In the present 'way' we have present 'truth' and present 'life;' and each fresh appropriation of the truth deepens that communion by which the life is conditioned.

7 unto the Father, but [1]by me. If ye had known me, ye
would have known my Father also: from henceforth
8 ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto
him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

[1] Or, *through*.

It may be well to notice, too, that the prominence here given to the mention of the 'way' arises from that thought of *separation* with which the minds of the disciples were filled. Jesus had said to them, 'I must go away,' and it seemed to them as if in the language a journey were involved, which would separate them from their Lord. Therefore with loving condescension the figure is taken up, and they are assured that He is Himself, if we may so speak, this very distance to be traversed. Is it a 'way' that they have to travel? Then He is 'the way,' and all along its course they shall be still with Him.

Ver. 7. **If ye had learned to know me, ye would know my Father also.** The change in this verse from 'the Father' of ver. 6 to 'my Father,' as well as the use in the original of two different verbs for 'know,' is peculiarly instructive. The meaning seems to be, that when we have gained a knowledge of the Son, we find ourselves possessed of a knowledge of His Father; then in that knowledge, the veil which hides from us in our natural condition the true knowledge of God is withdrawn, and we possess the highest knowledge of all, the knowledge of God in the deepest verity of His being, the knowledge of 'the Father.' It is true that we immediately read, **From henceforth ye learn to know Him, and have seen Him.** But we must bear in mind that possession of a *perfect* knowledge of God is never reached by us. Each stage of 'knowing' is but the beginning of a new stage of 'learning to know' more; 'forgetting the things that are behind,' we start ever afresh towards a knowledge of 'the Father,' always increasing but never consummated. The same remark applies to 'have seen,' by which we are to understand 'have begun to see.' This knowledge, this sight, the disciples have 'from henceforth.' The point of time is not Pentecost anticipated. It dates from the great 'Now' of chap. 13: 31, and the explanation is to be found in the peculiar circumstances in which the disciples have been placed since then. They have been separated from all worldly thoughts of Jesus; His true 'glory' and the true glory of the Father in Him have been revealed in all their brightness; and in an intimacy of communion with their Lord never enjoyed before they 'learn to know' with an inward spiritual discernment, they 'have seen' with a sharpness of spiritual intuition, not previously possessed by them.

Ver. 8. The same bluntness of spiritual sight (that is, really the same weakness of faith) that had been exhibited by Thomas is now exhibited by Philip, though in relation to another point. Jesus had said (ver. 7) that the disciples had seen the Father, meaning that they had seen the Father in Him. Philip fails to understand; and, think-

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with
you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that
hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou,
10 Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am
in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that
I say unto you I speak not from myself; but the
11 Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me

ing perhaps of the revelation given to Moses in Ex. 33: 18, 19, he asks that he and his fellow-disciples may have granted them some actual vision of the Father (comp. his spirit in 6: 7). The reply of Jesus, vers. 9–21, falls into three leading parts, of which the first is found in vers. 9–11.

Ver. 9. 'Have I been with you,' literally, 'Am I with you,' the very words of ver. 3. The words are those of astonishment and sorrow that the effect of all this spiritual intercourse has failed; and the declaration of Jesus in the latter half of the verse rests upon the fact that He is the complete expression of the Father (comp. chap. 1: 18). He does not say 'my Father' but 'the Father,' because He speaks not of the personal relation between the Father and Himself, but of the light in which God is revealed as Father to all who learn to know Him in the Son.

Ver. 10. If what is stated in the first clause of this verse be the fact, the bluntness of Philip's spiritual vision will be proved. It is of this truth, therefore, that Jesus speaks. The statement is that of one great truth with two sides, each of which has its appropriate proof—the first, in the 'words' of Jesus; the second, in the Father's 'works.' For, as to the first, that Jesus is 'in the Father,' He is the Word, and words characterize Him. If His words are not 'from Himself,' He is not from Himself; if they are the Father's, He is 'in the Father.' As to the second, the Father does not work directly, He works only through the Son; therefore as the Father He can be known only in the Son. Thus the Son is *in* the Father; He *is* in no other way: the Father is *in* the Son; He *is the Father* in no other way. Hence the proof of the statement to Philip, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' is complete. The distinction between 'words' and 'works' in this verse thus springs from a point of view wholly different from that which refers the one to the teaching, the other to the miracles, of Jesus; it is connected with the essential qualities of that Son who is the Word, of that God who is the Father. The transition from the 'words' to the 'works,' otherwise so inexplicable, is also thus at once explained. This is the only passage of the Gospel in which the verb 'say' is connected with the 'words' or with the 'word' of Jesus. 'The words that I say unto you' are equivalent to 'My words.'

Ver. 11. Jesus has established the proposition by which He would

that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or
12 else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily,
verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the
works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works*
than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

show Philip the impropriety of his request. He now calls upon him, and upon the other disciples through him, to receive it. First, they ought to do this upon the authority of His own statement, the statement of One who is in the Father; but, if that be not enough, then upon the authority of the Father's works in Him. By these last we are certainly not to understand miracles alone. Miracles are, no doubt, included, although not simply as works of supernatural power. All the works of the Father in the Son are meant, all bearing on them those tokens of the Father which appeal to the heart, and ought to satisfy men that, in doing them, Jesus reveals not Himself but the Father. The second part of the reply follows in vers. 12–14.

Ver. 12. It seemed to the disciples that, by the departure of Jesus, all the glorious manifestations of the Divine which they had beheld in Him would be brought to an end. So far is this from being the case that these shall not only continue but become even more glorious than before. By 'works' we are to understand something wider than miracles, for the promise is to all believers, and it cannot be said that they in any age have wrought greater miracles than their Lord. What Jesus speaks of is the general power of the spiritual life, not only as it exists in the breast of the believer, but as it shows itself in all life and action corresponding to its nature. What He had been and had done was to be exhibited in the disciples themselves. They were to be put into His position, to take His place, to be sustained in all inward strength and outward manifestation as He had been. Nay more, He was *going* to the Father,—not the verb of 13: 33, 36; 14: 4, 5, but another, suggesting less the thought of what He was *leaving* than the thought of what He was *going to;* and He was going to '*the* Father,' not His own Father only, but One who stood in the same relation to all the members of His body. Therefore what He had been and had done would be still more gloriously unfolded in them than it had been as yet in Him. When He went to the Father, His life would be set free from the struggles and sufferings by which its power and glory had been obscured on earth. But His disciples were one with Him, and what He was they should be. They are the organs not of a humbled only but of an ascended Lord; and through what He is at the right hand of the Father they shall do 'greater works' than He did in the world. The same great truth is expressed in 1 John 4: 17, 'Because as He is' (not *was*), 'so are we in this world.' How little do Christians realie their position and their privileges!

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I
14 do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye
shall ask [1] me anything* in my name, that will I do.
15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And

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[1] Many ancient authorities omit *me*.

* "For shall ask me anything," read "shall ask anything" and let marg. [1] read many ancient authorities.—*Am. Com.*

Vers. 13, 14. The twice repeated 'this I will do,' of these verses, is the taking up again of the 'do' of ver. 12; so that what Jesus says is, that He in His glorified condition, being the believer's strength for what he does, will be the real doer both of the 'works' and the 'greater works' done by Him. The condition on our part of the accomplishment of this promise is prayer. (1) Prayer in the name of Jesus, the words 'in my name' occurring in both these verses. This expression is connected not only with our asking, but, in ver. 26, with the Father's sending; and that the order as well as the contents of the thought is to be observed, is made clear by the fact that in the latter part of the discourse the same order is observed (comp. 15: 16 and 16: 23). The 'name' spoken of is in the first place the name of 'Son;' as we shall find that in chap. 17 the 'name' of God spoken of is in the first place that of 'the Father.' But the thought is not to be confined to this. When we bring all the passages together in which the words occur in 14–17, and particularly the verse before us and 17: 11, 12 ('Thy name which thou hast given me'), it becomes clear that we must extend the meaning of 'name' so as to include the revelation of what the Father is in the Son. To ask 'in the name of the Son of man,' therefore, is to ask in a confidence and hope which have their essence and ground in the revelation of the Son. (2) Prayer to the Son as well as to the Father; yet not to Jesus regarded as an independent personality, but to Him as the Son, so that in praying to Him we pray at the same time to the Father, for only in the Father do we know the Son. Hence also the 'whatsoever' of ver. 13, and the 'anything' of ver. 14, have in this their necessary limitations. Believers are not viewed here simply as members of the human family in the midst of the weaknesses, perplexities and sorrows of humanity. They pray with the mind of the Son, which is the mind of the Father, and in that sphere only can they be assured that whatever they ask shall be done for them and through them, 'that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' Only by the explanation thus offered does it seem possible to account for the insertion of 'me' in ver. 14; and the whole statement may be regarded as a realization of chap. 1: 51, even the very same order of thought being there observed, the 'ascending' preceding the 'descending' of angels upon the Son of man. The third part of the reply to Philip follows in vers. 15–21.

Ver. 15. An abiding communion between the glorified Redeemer and His disciples on earth has been spoken of as established,—a com-

16 I will [1]pray the Father, and he shall give you another

[1] Gr. *make request of.*

munion not to be broken by the 'going away' of Jesus to the Father. The object of the present verse is to point out the condition by which alone this communion can be preserved and its greatest blessing, the presence of the Advocate, enjoyed—love. This love, too, consists in a loving self-surrender of ourselves to the sole object of glorifying the Father, analogous to the loving self-surrender of Jesus; for 'my commandments' are not merely commandments which He gives, but which He has Himself first received and made His own (comp. ver. 27).

Ver. 16. **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, that he may be with you for ever.** The word here translated in our English Version 'Comforter, and partially introduced into the English language as 'Paraclete,' means properly, One called to stand by us for our help, our Advocate, Helper, Representative. 'Comforter' is not its meaning. And the unfortunate use of this term, so dear to the Christian amidst the troubles of the world, has tended in no small degree to make believers think less of strength than of comfort, of the experience of a private Christian who needs consolation instead of that of one who has to face the opposition of the world in his Master's cause. The 'Paraclete' is really One who stands by our side, sustains us in our Christian calling, and breathes into us ever new measures of a spirit of boldness and daring in the warfare we have to wage. He is the representative of the glorified Lord with His militant people upon earth. The promise of this Advocate is given four times in the chapters before us (the only other passage in the New Testament where the word occurs being 1 John 2: 1); and in the first two, chap. 14: 16, 26, it has reference mainly to the preparation of the heart and mind of the disciples; in the other two chaps. 15: 26, 16: 7, to their actual work. The Advocate thus spoken of is further marked out by the remarkable addition of the word '*another;*' and the word implies that the first Advocate had been Jesus Himself, whose 'going away' prevented His continuing to be still the Advocate and Helper of His disciples. In this sense we find Him described by the very term here used in 1 John 2: 1: 'We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' It is in the idea of representation that the two designations meet. Jesus glorified represents us before the Father's throne; the Holy Spirit abiding with us represents Jesus gone to the Father. This word 'other' is thus full of the most precious meaning. It tells us that Jesus when on earth had been the Paraclete, the Advocate of His disciples. It suggests that what He had been to them during His earthly life, His representative will be after He has 'gone away,' so that every *narrative* of what He *had done* for them becomes a *prediction* of what the Holy Spirit *will do* for them and for us who come after them. The verb 'ask' of this verse is different from that so translated in vers. 13 and 14; and it can be used

17 [1] Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, *even* the
Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for
it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know
18 him; for he abideth with you and shall be in you. I
19 will not leave you [2]desolate: I come unto you. Yet
a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more;
but ye behold me: because I live, [3] ye shall live

[1] Or, *Advocate.* Or, *Helper.* Gr. *Paraclete.* [2] Or, *orphans.* [3] Or, *and ye shall live.*

only of One who stands in that closeness of relation, in that intimacy of union with the Father, in which Jesus is represented throughout these chapters as standing to Him (comp. 16: 26; 17: 9, 15, 20).

Ver. 17. What this Advocate is, is now explained more fully. He is the Spirit of 'the truth,' the Spirit whose essence is 'the truth,' and who is the medium by which 'the truth' comes to men. This Spirit the world cannot receive, because it has no perception of the things with which He deals, no sympathy with them, no adaptation to them. As it cannot 'hear God's word, because it is not of God,' (chap. 8: 47), so it cannot receive the spirit of the truth, because it has no eye for the spiritual and invisible, and no growing apprehension of them. The Spirit comes to the world, and would stay with it; but it will not have Him for a guest, and it never attains to that experimental knowledge of Him which is alone worthy of the name. But the disciples are 'of the truth;' they welcome the heavenly Guest; He 'abides' with them; He 'is' in them; they advance to ever deeper knowledge of what He is and does.

Ver. 18. The disciples were the 'little children' of Jesus (13: 33), and He may therefore well speak to them as a Father. Not from Pentecost, but from the moment of His reunion to the Father, and by means of the Spirit of the truth, He comes to them (see ver. 20).

Ver. 19. **Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no longer; but ye behold me.** The 'little while' is that of 13: 33, extending from the moment immediately at hand to the resurrection. After that 'little while' the world beholdeth Jesus no more, but His disciples behold Him,—the present tense being used in both clauses absolutely, and not as the mere present of time. In the first clause 'beholdeth' can be understood only of physical vision, for in no other way had the world ever beheld Jesus, and the risen Saviour did not show Himself to the world. In the second clause 'behold' must be so far at least used in the same sense, and the appearance of the risen Jesus must again be thought of. Yet the meaning of the second 'behold' is not thus exhausted, for it obviously includes a vision of the Redeemer not limited by the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, but stretching onward into the eternal future. The 'Me' is Jesus glorified: Him, because He is glorified,

20 also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my
21 Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath
my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that
loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of
my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest

the world unfit for the vision 'beholdeth no longer.' But the disciples, one with Him not only in His humiliation but in His 'glory,' behold Him, first from time to time with the eye of sense, always with the eye of faith and in the power of the Spirit. It need only be further remarked that this intensifying of the meaning of the second 'behold' may be indicated by the order of the original, which gives the place of emphasis to the word in the second clause; and that, by the view now taken, we at once see the connection of the words that follow: only the 'living' can behold the risen Lord, or have the abiding spiritual sight.—**Because I live and ye shall live.** Not, 'Because I live ye shall live also,'—which would divert the thoughts to something entirely foreign to the course of our Lord's remarks; but, 'Because I live glorified, and ye, in this respect wholly different from the world, shall live in the power of Me, your risen Lord, therefore shall this intimacy of intercourse, implied in My coming and your beholding, last unbroken and for ever.'

Ver. 20. Not the particular day of the resurrection, or of Pentecost, or of the Second Coming, but the day beginning with the return of Jesus to His Father, when He shall send to His disciples the promised Advocate the Spirit of the truth. Then in the knowledge of ever-deepening experience they shall know that the Son of man whom they had thought 'gone away' is really in the bosom of His Father, glorified in the Father (comp. chap. 13: 31), that they are in Him thus glorified, and that He thus glorified is in them. So shall the end of all be attained, the perfect union in glory of Father, Son, and all believers, in one uninterrupted, unchanging, eternal unity (comp. 17: 21, 23). It is of great importance to note the expression, 'Ye in me, and I in you.' We cannot here follow out the thought, but we must not fail to notice that the fulness of the union referred to belongs only to the time of Jesus glorified. The limiting influences of the world, of the flesh, must be overpassed before that perfect union of all existence is reached which can be established only (for 'God is Spirit,' 4: 24) where the Spirit is the dominating, all-embracing, all-controlling element of being. Jesus says 'my Father,' not 'the Father,' because His personal union with the Father forms the basis of the wider and more glorious union here referred to.

Ver. 21. The thought of privilege in ver. 14 led to that condition on which alone privilege can be preserved (ver. 15). We have a similar transition now. Here, as there, one thing must be dfstinctly remembered, that this unity is one of love. There is love on the part of the believer to his Lord, love on the part of the Father to the be-

22 myself unto him. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him,
Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest
23 thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus
answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he
will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and
we will come unto him, and make our abode with
24 him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words;
and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the
Father's who sent me.

liever, love on the part of Jesus to the believer. In this fellowship of love the result of all will be the manifestation by Himself of the glorified Redeemer to His people. He will 'manifest' Himself *from His glory*, and in knowing and seeing Him by the power of the Spirit they will know and see the Father. A third difficulty arises in the breast of Judas.

Ver. 22. Judas is distinguished from the traitor, that we may have kept distinctly before us that the latter had gone out (13: 30). His error consists in not seeing that the spiritual can only be apprehended by the spiritual. Filled with the thought of the external kingdom, he cannot understand why the glorious revelation of Christ to be made to himself and his fellow disciples should not be made to all, so that all may believe and be blessed.

Ver. 23. Again the thought of ver. 15, and a fuller expression of the main teaching of this chapter, and, indeed, of this whole section of the Gospel. The answer to Judas is, that the manifestation referred to must be limited, because it can only be made where there is that communion of love which proves itself by the spirit of self-denial and submission to the charge of Jesus (comp. vers. 17, 21). Two additional points are to be noted—(1) The climax: no longer 'I' but 'We,' a fuller presentation of the truth. (2) The beginning of the discourse is taken up again, and thus its parts are more closely united: 'In my Father's house are many places of abode' (ver. 2); 'We will make our abode with him.'

Ver. 24. A fuller explanation than before why the world cannot receive the manifestation of the Father and the Son, but given now from the negative rather than the positive side. It will be observed that in vers. 23, 24, we have first 'word,' then 'words,' and then, again, a return to the singular 'word.' The explanation may in part be that to him who receives in faith the 'words' of Jesus are one; he sees their unity: they are a 'word:' to him who receives not in faith they are scattered and unconnected, 'words' not a 'word.' We remark only further that our Lord, while implying in vers. 23 and 24 that the world cannot receive such a manifestation of the Father and of Himself as had been promised to His own, shows with equal dis-

25 These things have I spoken unto you, while *yet*
26 abiding with you. But the [1] Comforter, *even* the Holy
Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he
shall teach you all things, and bring to your remem-

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[1] Or, *Advocate.* Or, *Helper.* Gr. *Paraclete.*

tinctness that there is no class favored in an arbitrary manner. All *make themselves* what they are. If 'any one,' He says, 'loves me;' and, again, 'he that loveth me.' Every one may come and have the promise in all its fulness.

Ver. 25. We now enter upon a new part of the discourse, in which the leading idea is the strength to be afforded to the disciples after the departure of their Lord. It is important to notice that this is bestowed upon them not merely as disciples, but as disciples about to be sent forth to occupy their Master's place, and to do His work. During the absence of their Master the Advocate shall be with them.

Ver. 26. Again we meet with the expression 'in my name,' considered at ver. 13, where we saw that it primarily refers to the name 'Son,' and then to the revelation of the Father in the Son. This conception suits each of those nine places in chaps. 14–17, where the words occur, as well as the two others in chap. 17, where Jesus speaks of manifesting or declaring the 'name' of God. Here the Father sends the Holy Spirit 'in the name' of Jesus; that is, the sending of the Spirit is grounded in the Father's revelation of Himself in the Son. It is because in Him He reveals Himself to us as our Father, because He makes us by faith in Him His own sons, that we are brought into that relation to Him which enables us to receive the fulness of His Spirit. In this verse, as contrasted with verse 16, we have not merely a promise of the Spirit of the truth. There is an advance of thought, and the Spirit is spoken of in His *training* power, as He *applies* to the heart 'the truth' which is His being. Several particulars in the words before us illustrate this. First, there is the epithet 'holy,' which here, as throughout this Gospel, expresses the idea of complete separation from all that is of the world, and complete consecration to all that is spiritual and heavenly (comp. chaps. 3: 34; 10: 36). Secondly, the Father is to 'send' the Spirit to the disciples even as He has sent the Son (ver. 24), a statement indicating that He is sent to be in them for a similar purpose. And lastly, the 'all things' that the Spirit is to teach must (according to the rules suggested by the climactic structure of our Gospel) be included in the 'all things' spoken by Jesus, and now to be brought to their remembrance. What Jesus taught shall be the 'all things' that are taught; can they be taught for any other purpose than to be again spoken for the salvation of men? In the words of Jesus 'all things' needed for man's salvation are implicitly contained, and with that teaching the disciples shall be filled. These considerations lead directly to the conclusion, that Jesus is now dealing with His disciples not as sim-

27 brance all that I said unto you. Peace I leave with
you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world
giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be trou-
28 bled; neither let it be fearful. Ye heard how I said
to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved
me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the
29 Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now
I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it
30 is come to pass, ye may believe. I will no more

ply believers in His name, but as persons about to enter on His work.

Ver. 27. The peace spoken of here is not the legacy of a dying father, but the salutation of a departing Master. It is thus not mere peace of heart, a pacified conscience, the result of a personal resting in the love of God. It is peace in the midst of the trials which the world brings on the followers of Jesus while they perform their task; peace that is the result of His having 'overcome the world' (comp. on chap. 16: 33). 'My' peace, again, is the peace which Jesus Himself enjoys as well as that which He alone can give; this peace becomes the true possession of the receiver (comp. on chap. 17: 14). The effect is that the disciples shall neither be 'troubled' from within, nor 'afraid' with a coward terror in the presence of outward foes.

Ver. 28. But the disciples were not only to have peace; true love would fill their hearts with joy. The 'going away' of Jesus is really a 'going unto the Father,' a re-establishment in all the glory of the Father's immediate presence. The last clause of the verse contains simply the general teaching of the Gospel, of the whole Bible, and of all the greatest theologians of the Church, that the Son, while of the same nature as the Father, is subordinate to Him, inferior (for essence is not spoken of) economically, as Mediator. While, however, the departure of Jesus was thus a return to the glory of the Father's presence, and good for Him, we must not suppose that it is on that account that the disciples are to 'rejoice.' 'If ye loved me' is not an appeal to their personal interest in Himself; it appeals rather to their interest in His work and purpose; it is a statement of the fact that ripened Christian perception, when they stand in the 'love' spoken of in vers. 21, 23, 24, will lead them to see that the departure of Jesus to His Father was an arrangement fraught with far higher blessings, both to His believing people and to the world, than His remaining among them would have been. The love which is the condition of higher revelations will teach them that the departure preliminary to these is not a matter of sorrow, but of joy.

Ver. 29. It is not a first faith, but the deeper working of faith, the experimental seal to it, that is spoken of.

Ver. 30. **I will no longer talk much with you, for the**

speak much with you, for the prince of the world
31 cometh: and he hath nothing in me; but that the
world may know that I love the Father, and as the
Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise,
let us go hence.

**prince of the world cometh.** (Comp. on 12: 31.) 'The prince of this world' is equivalent to the world in its essence. He embodies the spirit of the world, so that what is said of it may be said of him, what is said of him may be said of it. Observe the 'cometh,' the contrast of the 'coming' of Jesus.—**And he hath nothing in me.** Ver. 31. **But he cometh that the world may perceive that I love the Father, and that even as the Father gave me commandment so I do. Arise, let us go hence.** The difficulty of interpreting these words is very great. The common interpretations of 'hath nothing in me'—such as, 'hath no power over me,' I die freely; 'hath no ground of accusation against me,' I am innocent; 'hath no hold on me,' I present no point on which he can fasten his attack—are all at variance with the meaning of the verb 'hath' in the writings of John. The true interpretation seems to be that there is an absolute barrier between the 'prince of this world' and Jesus. Neither in the Person (in whom is no sin) nor in the work of the Redeemer has he any interest; there is absolutely no point of connection (the expression of the original is strong) between him and these. He has deliberately opposed, denied and rejected the truth. Therefore he has now nothing to do with it—except in one terrible respect! The following words point out the exception. He 'comes,' and the 'world' ruled by Him comes, to see that He whom they have rejected is the 'consecrated One' of God, the 'Sent' of God, the Fulfiller of the Father's will. But they come to see this only when it is too late; when amazement and horror alone remain for them; when the judgment shall be executed; and when out of their own mouth they shall be condemned. The words in short express, although far more pointedly than elsewhere, the great truth so often stated in Scripture, that those who reject the salvation shall meet the judgment of Jesus, and that, when they meet it, they shall acknowledge that it is just. Blind now, they shall not be always blind; their eyes shall be opened; and to their own shame, they shall confess that He whom they rejected was the 'Beloved' of the Father, and that His work was the doing of the Father's will. Hence the startling close of the discourse: 'Arise, let us go hence.' Not merely: 'Let us meanwhile arise, and leave this place that we may go to another, where my discourse may be resumed;' but, 'Let us go: I have led you to the glorious places of abode in my Father's house, and I have followed the world to its doom; I have traced the history of mankind to its close; it is over; arise, let us go hence.'

It is not easy to determine with certainty at what moment, or even in what place the discourse which we have been considering was spoken. As to the latter point, indeed, the closing words of the chapter do not leave much doubt. Jesus and His disciples must still have been in the upper chamber, where the Supper was instituted. The precise moment is more difficult to fix. Yet, when we turn to Luke 22: 35–38, we find there words of Jesus so obviously connected with the topics handled here that we may, with great probability, suppose that both belong to the same period of that night. If so, the discourse in the present chapter was delivered after the Supper was instituted, and before our Lord rose from the table. We may further express our belief that the discourse in chaps. 15 and 16 was spoken in the same place, the difference being that during its delivery, as well as during the intercessory prayer of chap. 17, Jesus and His disciples stood. Not only is chap. 18: 1 (hardly permitting us to think of a 'going forth' till after 'He had spoken these things') favorable to this view, but it is extremely improbable that chaps. 15–17 could have been uttered on the way to Gethsemane. The tone of thought, too, in chaps. 15 and 16 appears to be in harmony with this conception of the circumstances. We shall see in the exposition how much more the idea of apostolic action and suffering comes out in these chapters than it does even in chap. 14. To this corresponded the attitude of rising and standing. The appropriate demands of the moment, therefore, and not any change of intention, led to our Lord's still continuing in the upper room. He stands there with the solemnized group around Him. 'I have given you,' He would say by action as well as word, 'My commission and My promise; let us be up and doing; there is still deeper meaning in the commission, still greater richness in the promise.'

## CHAPTER 15: 1—16: 33.

## *Jesus, alone with His Disciples, Finishes His Last Consolatory Discourse.*

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husband-

*Jesus, alone with His Disciples, Finishes His Last Consolatory Discourse,* Chap. 15: 1–16: 33.

CONTENTS.—The solemnity of the moment, the fulness of Old Testament thought which dwelt in the mind of Jesus, perhaps even a reminiscence of that 'fruit of the vine' of which they had all so recently partaken, are enough to account for the language with which our Lord begins this second part of His last discourse. It is of more importance to observe that it is distinguished from what goes before, not so much by presenting us with matter entirely new, as by applying the same line of instruction in an advanced form to the advanced position in which the disciples are supposed to be. In chap. 14 the main thought is that of the true union brought about by the apparent separation; the chief reference has been to personal experience; and the climax is reached in vers. 20 and 23. That is the *preparation* of the disciples for their work; they 'are' in Him, and He in them. The chief thought now is that of 'abiding,' and this abiding presupposes difficulty and trial. 'Being in Him is life; 'abiding in Him is life working, triumphing. The advance from chap. 14 to chaps. 15

2 man. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

and 16 consists in the application of principles rather than in any change from one set of principles to another. The subordinate parts of the section are—(1) chap. 15, vers. 1-17; (2) vers. 18-27; (3) chap. 16, vers. 1-11; (4) vers. 12-15; (5) vers. 16 24; (6) vers. 25-33.

[The allegory of the Vine and the Branches—the second of the two *paroimiæ* in John, the other being that of the Good Shepherd, chap. 10, illustrates under the figure of the noblest of fruit-bearing plants the precious truth of the life-union of believers with Christ, the only source of spiritual life and fruitfulness. Paul illustrates the same idea by the vital relation of the head to the members. The two parabolic discourses on Christ the Shepherd, and Christ the Vine impressed themselves deeply on the mind of the ancient Church, and furnished the material for the first allegorical representations of the Saviour. The finest and most frequent pictures in the Roman catacombs are those of a youthful Shepherd carrying a lamb in his arms or on his shoulder, and of a luxuriant vine sending life and vigor in all its branches and making them bear abundant fruit.—P. S.]

Ver. 1. In the Old Testament the vine is the type of Israel, planted by the Almighty as the husbandman to adorn, refresh, and quicken the earth (Ps. 80; Isa. 5: 1; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 19: 10; Hosea 10: 1). But Israel proved itself 'the degenerate plant of a strange vine.' Jesus, therefore, is here the 'true vine,' because He is the true Israel of God, in whom is fulfilled all that is demanded of the true vine, whether for beauty and blessing to the world, or for glory to the husbandman. In Him all His people are summed up. He is not merely the stem: He is 'the vine,' including in Himself all its parts. He is thus also the 'true' (comp. on chap. 1: 9) vine, in contrast not so much with a degenerate Israel within as with Israel after the flesh as a whole, with the ancient Theocracy even in its best and palmiest days. That Theocracy had been no more than a shadow of the true; now the 'true' was come, and God Himself had planted it.

Ver. 2. Two parts of the husbandman's operations with his vine are here alluded to, the first that of taking away unfruitful branches. Any branch of the vine that is found, and as soon as it is found, to be not fruit-bearing is cut off. It is probable that the allusion is primarily to Judas (comp. 17: 12), but thereafter to all of whom the traitor is the representative, who, taking their places for a time in the number of the disciples, prove by the result that they have no right to be there (comp. 1 John 2: 19). They are branches of the vine; but, as only outward and carnal not inward and spiritual, they are taken away, their further fate being not yet mentioned. The second part of the husbandman's work follows, that of pruning, for which the word cleansing, with its deeper meaning, is appropriately used.

3 Already ye are clean because of the word which
4 I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you.
As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it
abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide
5 in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that

The object of the Father is the inward, spiritual, cleansing of His children, in contrast with the outward purifications of Israel (2: 6; 3: 25); and the cleansing spoken of (which follows, not precedes, their fruit-bearing) is future and continuous. The means are afflictions, not of any kind but for the sake of Jesus, here especially the afflictions to which the disciples shall be exposed in doing their Master's work, as He Himself 'learned obedience by the things which He suffered.' The attaining of this perfection is, however, a gradual process, and hence the words 'that it may bear more fruit.' It is possible that the 'fruit' to be borne may include all Christian graces, although it would seem as if the general growth of the Christian life were rather set forth in the growth and strengthening of the 'branch.' The considerations already adduced, and the whole strain of the discourse, lead us rather to understand by the 'fruit' now spoken of fruit borne in carrying on the work of Jesus in the world (comp. on ver. 16).

Ver. 3. On 'word,' not 'words,' see on chap. 14: 24. The 'ye' is emphatic. *They* were pruned. *they* were 'clean;' and that 'already,' because they had already received the word which they were now, in their turn, to communicate. Jesus does not say that they are clean 'through,' but 'because of' the word which He had spoken unto them. They have heard (and received) the word of 'the Holy One of God,' and because His word is in them they are clean. Thus are they fitted for imparting the means of a like cleansing to others. Not personal piety but Christian action is still in view, and still the 'cleanness' which they possess does not exclude the future and continuous cleansing.

Ver. 4. Thus cleansed, one thing more is required, that they maintain their position, that they continue in the vine. It is the law of the branch that, if it is to flourish and bear fruit, there must be a constant and reciprocal action between it and the vine of which it is a part. This is expressed in the two clauses before us. He who will not abide in Christ cannot have Christ to abide in him. How much is made dependent upon the human will!

Ver. 5. The transition from ver. 4 to ver. 5 appears to be similar to that from chap. 5: 19–23 to chap. 5: 24,—a transition from the principle to its application to men. In substance the lesson is the same as before; and it has only to be distinctly observed that the words 'ye can do nothing' refer to the efforts of one already a believer. The state of faith is presupposed.

abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much
6 fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man
abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is
withered; and they gather them, and cast them into
7 the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and
my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and
8 it shall be done unto you. Herein [1]is my Father

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[1] Or, *was.*

Ver. 6. **If any one abide not in me**, etc. 'The branch' here is simply 'the branch' of ver. 4, the branch considered in itself: the words 'cast forth' and 'is withered' are so used in the original as to denote the certainty, the immediateness, of the doom referred to; the last three verbs of the verse carry our thoughts to a later period than that to which the casting out and the withering belong. Instead of exhibiting beauty of leaf and bearing clusters of fruit, these branches shrivel up, die, and are consumed. It is to be observed that, although the branches spoken of are barren, it is not their barrenness that is the immediate thought here, but the fact that they do not abide in the vine.

Ver. 7. The sudden departure in this verse from the figure which our Lord had been employing is worthy of notice. A somewhat similar departure occurs at ver. 3, and in both cases it takes place in connection with a reference to the 'word' or 'sayings' of Jesus: these belong to living men. The thought that the 'sayings' of Jesus abide in us as the condition of blessedness is fundamentally the same as that expressed previously in ver. 3, 'because of the word;' the mode in which the word works is now more fully brought out. Still more worthy of notice is the fact that, in the latter part of the verse, where the asking is spoken of, the words 'in My name' do not occur; but in their place we find, 'If ye abide in Me, and My sayings abide in you.' This strikingly illustrates what we have already endeavored to bring out, that 'in My name' implies a union with Jesus by faith, resting on a knowledge of and adherence to the revelation that He has given. The asking spoken of must be understood not in a general sense, but with a special reference to bearing fruit. Were this not the case the verse would be quite isolated

Ver. 8. **Herein was my Father glorified, that ye might bear much fruit and become my disciples.** The last verse had expressed the highest and closest communion that can be established between the believer and the Father revealed in the Son,—a communion so high, so close, that the former asks whatsoever he will and it is done unto him. But that is the attainment of all God's purposes, the issue of all His dealings, with His people. The 'Herein' of this verse is, accordingly, not to be explained by the words that follow, as

glorified, [1]that ye bear much fruit; and *so* shall ye be
9 my disciples. Even as the Father hath loved me, I
10 also have loved you: abide ye in my love. If ye
keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;
even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and

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[1] Many ancient authorities read *that ye bear much fruit and be my disciples.*

if the meaning were that the glory of God is found in His appointing His people to bear much fruit and be disciples of Jesus. That is the *result* of His purpose rather than the purpose itself. The purpose is union, communion, fellowship; and out of these flows an ever-increasing bearing of fruit ('*much* fruit'), and an ever-growing conformity ('become' not 'be') of the believer with his Lord, alike in privilege and in life. 'Herein was my Father glorified' belongs, therefore, to the previous verse,—to that abiding in Jesus, and that asking and receiving in Him, which expressed the purpose of the Father (comp. 14: 13). At the point we have reached this is supposed to be accomplished, and as a consequence of such abiding fellowship with the Father and the Son comes the growing fruitfulness, the deepening discipleship, of those who are true branches of the fruitful vine. Hence the rendering 'was glorified' seems preferable to 'is glorified' which we retain in chap. 13: 31. It is an ideal state of things with which we are dealing; and the much fruit and the discipleship referred to do not belong only to the present, but, like the 'cleanness' spoken of in ver. 3, are also future and continuous.

Ver. 9. **Even as the Father loved me, I also loved you: abide in my love.** By keeping in view what has been said on ver. 8 we shall understand the transition here to the thought of love. The main thought of that verse was, as we have seen, that of union and communion with the Father and the Son; but the main element of that communion is love,—love which flows forth from the Father to the Son, and then from the Son to the members of His body, thus forming that community of love so often spoken of in these chapters.

Ver. 10. The disciples have heard the words 'abide in my love.' How are they to do so? The words before us are an answer to the question; and they constitute a parallel to those which we have already met at 14: 20, 21, only that now we read not merely of 'being,' but of 'abiding,' the characteristic word of this chapter. It is not simply the doing of special commandments that is thought of (comp. on 13: 34), but a complete adoption of the Father's will by the Son and of the Son's will by us: and this is not spoken of as a proof of love, but as the condition which makes continued love possible. The Father never ceases to love the Son, because the Son's will is the expression of His own. The Son never ceases to love His disciples, because their will is the expression of His will; and without this harmony of will and act union and fellowship are impossible.

11 abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto
you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may
12 be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love
13 one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love
hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life
14 for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things

Ver. 11. *My joy* must be interpreted in the same way as 'My peace' at 14: 27. It is the joy which Jesus possessed as 'anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows,' which flowed from His uninterrupted possession of His Father's love (ver. 9), which was ever and again renewed as He felt that He was accomplishing His Father's will (ver. 10), which was crowned in that uninterrupted intercourse with His Father in which He asked and received whatsoever He desired (11: 42), and which filled His heart amidst all the trials and sorrows of His work on earth (comp. Luke 10: 21). That very joy He will communicate to His disciples, and their joy will be then 'fulfilled.' Like Him who went before them, they shall 'see of the travail of their soul and shall be satisfied.' The arrangement of the words in the original of this verse, by which 'my' is brought into the closest juxtaposition with 'in you,' is worthy of notice (comp. chap. 14: 1, 3).

Ver. 12. The sum of what was to be said in this part of the discourse has been spoken. One point needs further elucidation—love. It is here enjoined and explained anew. The singular 'commandment' does not differ materially from the plural of ver. 10 (see on that verse, and comp. on 14: 23, 24). Jesus had loved them with a self-sacrificing love; and *because* He had so loved them He charges them to live in self-sacrificing love for one another. The 'I loved you' is not to be resolved into 'I have loved you.' As at 13: 34, it is of love brought back to their minds in His absence that He speaks.

Ver. 13. **Greater love hath no man than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.** How great His love which showed itself even unto death for them! They must imitate such love if they will 'keep His commandment' and exhibit His spirit. There is no contradiction between this statement and that in Rom. 5: 6-8. Enemies are not here in question. Jesus is alone with His friends, and one friend can give no greater proof of love to another than to die for him. The emphasis rests upon 'lay down his life,' not upon 'friends.'

Ver. 14. **Ye are my friends, if ye do that which I command you.** We have here no second motive to the exercise of brotherly love, based upon the obedience which the friends of Jesus are bound to render to Him. The emphatic 'Ye' shows clearly that Jesus would impress upon them with peculiar force that they were His friends. We must accordingly interpret in a manner similar to that

15 which I command you. No longer do I call you [1]servants; for the [2]servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto
16 you. Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

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[1] Gr. *bond-servants.* [2] Gr. *bond-servant.*

applied at chap. 14: 15. The words describe a condition or state: '*Ye* are my friends for whom in love *I* lay down *My* life,' and ye continue such in being led by the power of My love to lay down *your* lives for one another.

Ver. 15. At chap. 13: 16 Jesus had spoken of them as 'servants;' and (so closely connected with one another are the chapters which we are considering) we can hardly doubt that it is this very passage that He has now primarily in view. Then they had to learn the lesson of the foot-washing: now it is learned; and animated by a self-sacrificing love like His, they are no longer 'servants' but 'friends.' In one sense, indeed, they would be always 'servants' (comp. ver. 20), and in the other writings of the New Testament we see that even some of those now listening, as well as Paul, delighted to appropriate to themselves the title (2 Pet. 1: 1; Apoc. 1: 1; Rom. 1: 1, etc.); but that is not their only relationship to their Lord. Nor are the two relationships inconsistent with one another. Rather may we say that the livelier our sense of the privilege of friendship the deeper will be our humility, and the more truly we feel Jesus to be our 'Lord and Master' the more shall we be prepared to enter into the fulness of the privilege bestowed by Him. The evidence of this their state (or privilege) is given in the remainder of the verse. Jesus had kept nothing back from them of all that He their Lord was to 'do;' He had revealed to them all the will of God, in so far as it related to His Own mission and theirs for the salvation of men.

Ver. 16. He had not taught them merely to fill their minds with knowledge. He had 'heard' from the Father that He might 'do.' They 'hear' that they may 'do' also. As the Father, having taught, had sent Him, so He, having taught, sends them. He had 'chosen' them—a choice having here nothing to do with eternal predestination, but only with choosing them out of the world after they were in it. He had 'appointed' them, and put them into the position which they were to occupy on their post of duty. The manner in which their post is described is important. It is by the word 'go away,' the word so often used of Jesus Himself in this part of the Gospel. They were to 'go away;' that is, they had a departure to make as well as He. This

17 These things I command you, that ye may love one
18 another. If the world hateth you, [1]ye know that it

[1] Or, *know ye.*

can be nothing else but their going out into the world to take His place, to produce fruit to the glory of the Father, and to return with that fruit to their Father's house. How manifest is it that here again we have to do with the fruits of active Christian labor, not of private Christian life!—**That whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.** This is the culminating-point of the climax, taking us to the thought of that intimacy of communion with the Father which secures the answer to all our prayers, and the supply of all our needs. Three times now have we met in this discourse the promise just given, and the attentive reader will easily perceive the interesting gradation in the circumstances in which those to whom it is successively given are supposed to be. At 14: 12, 13, they are viewed simply as believers; at 15: 7, they 'abide in Christ, and His sayings abide in them;' now they have 'gone away,' and have borne abiding fruit. To each stage of Christian living and working the same promise in words belongs, but the fulness included in the words is dependent in each case on the amount of need to be supplied. It may be questioned how we are to understand the second 'that' of this verse, whether as co-ordinate to the first 'that' and so, like it, dependent on 'I have chosen you,' or as expressing a consequence of their bringing forth abiding fruit in their work of Christian love. The latter is undoubtedly to be preferred. Jesus chooses out His disciples for work first, for correspondingly higher privilege afterwards; and those who faithfully bear fruit are here assured that in this sphere of fruit-bearing with all its difficulties, and temptations, and trials, they shall want nothing to impart courage, boldness, hope, to make them overcome the world, as He Himself overcame it.

Ver. 17. A verse characteristic of the structure of this Gospel, forming like chap. 5: 30 at once a summary (to a large extent) of what has preceded, and a transition to what follows. All the great truths spoken by Jesus are intended to promote that which is the truest expression of the Divine, that which is the real ground and end of all existence—love. On the other hand, again, the mutual love of believers is that armor of proof in which they shall be able best to withstand the hatred of the world.

Ver. 18. **If the world hateth you, know that it hath hated me before it hated you.** The active work of the disciples always has provoked, and always will provoke, the world's hatred. In such a prospect there is need for strength; and strength is given by means of truth presented in one of the double pictures of our Gospel—the first extending to the close of chap. 15, the second to chap. 16: 15. First of all, in that hatred which they shall certainly experience, let them behold a proof that, engaged in their Master's service, they are

19 hath hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the
world, the world would love its own: but because ye
are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world,
20 therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word
that I said unto you, A [1]servant is not greater than
his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep
21 yours also. But all these things will they do unto
you for my name's sake, because they know not him
22 that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto

[1] Gr. *bond-servant.*

really filling their Master's place; and let them feel that the trials that befell Him ought surely to be no 'strange thing' to them. Their Master, their Friend, their Redeemer, trod the same path as that which they must tread. What thought could be more touching or more full of comforting and ennobling influences?

Ver. 19. Did the world behold in them its own offspring, it would love them; they would be its own. The rule is universal, and needed no further exposition; but they were not 'of' the world, they were born of a new and higher birth, they had even like their Master to bear witness of the world that its works were evil, and therefore it must hate them as it hated Him (comp. 7: 7, and 1 Kings 22: 8).

Ver. 20 The word referred to had been spoken at 13: 16, in an apparently different sense, but really, alike there and here, with the same deep oneness of meaning. The disciples are in the position of their Master, are one with Him; therefore are they bound to the same *duties* and exposed to the same *trials.* The parallelism between the 'word' of Jesus and that of His disciples is instructive. Lying at the bottom of all the language here employed is the great truth that what He has been they are to be.

Ver. 21. Their sufferings shall not only be like those of Jesus, but 'because of His name,' because of all that is involved in His Person and work—the Person and the work which they continually hold forth to men. The latter part of the verse contains at once an explanation of the world's folly and guilt, and a striking comment upon the fulness of meaning involved in the word 'name.' It is because the world knows not God that it hates alike the Son and His disciples. It thinks that it knows God, it has even a zeal for His worship; but the spirituality of His nature, the love which is the essence of His being, it does not know; it turns from them and hates them when they are revealed in their true character.

Ver. 22. **If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.** But in so doing the world is without excuse. Its unbe-

them, they had not had sin: but now they have no
23 excuse for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my
24 Father also. If I had not done among them the
works which none other did, they had not had sin:
but now have they both seen and hated both me and
25 my Father. But *this cometh to pass,* that the word
may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They
26 hated me without a cause. But when the [1]Comforter
is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father,
*even* the Spirit of truth, which [2]proceedeth from the

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[1] Or, *Advocate.* Or, *Helper.* Gr. *Paraclete.* [2] Or, *goeth forth from.*

lief, with all that hatred of the disciples to which it led, is its own deliberate act, its ground of condemnation at the bar of God, to be in due time the terrible ground of its own self-condemnation. Everything had been done, alike by the word and the works (ver. 24) of Jesus, to lead it to the truth and to a better mind. There is not merely instruction, there is also consolation to the persecuted followers of Jesus in the thought.

Ver. 23. Nay more, in hating Jesus, the world was also settting itself against that very God whom it professed to honor. It was really hating not the Son only, but His Father, whom He revealed. This was the disastrous issue of its course of action! Not they who inflicted suffering, but they who suffered, were the conquerors.

Ver. 24. Jesus had spoken in ver. 22 of his 'words' as sufficient to deprive the world of all excuse in rejecting and hating Him. He now turns to His 'works' as effecting the same end. The words of Jesus were the Father's words as well as His own (chap. 3: 34); of the same character are the 'works,' which here, as elsewhere, are not to be confined to miracles. They include all that Jesus did.

Ver. 25. The quotation is in all probability from Ps. 69: 4, with which Ps. 35: 19 and 109: 3 may be compared. On the 'fulfilment' spoken of, see what has already been said on chaps. 2: 17 and 12: 38. The quotation is made for the purpose of bringing out the aggravated guilt of those who were rejecting Jesus. They had condemned their fathers because of the persecutions to which God's Righteous Servant of old had been exposed; yet they 'filled up the measure of their fathers.'

Vers. 26, 27. **When the Advocate is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of the truth, which goeth forth from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me, and ye also bear witness, because from the beginning ye are with me.** Up to this point Jesus had encouraged His disciples by the assurance that they shall be strengthened to overcome whatever hatred and opposition from the world they shall

27 Father, he shall bear witness of me: [1]and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

[1] Or, *and bear ye also witness.*

have to encounter in the performance of their work. Now He further assures them that this is not all. They shall not merely meet the world unshaken by all that it can do: they shall also receive a Divine power, in the possession of which they shall bear a joyful and triumphant witness even in the midst of suffering. The Advocate shall be with them, and with them in a manner adapted to that stage of progress which they are thought of as having reached. In the promise of the Advocate here given, there is an advance upon that of chap. 14: 16, 26. In the latter passage the promise had been connected with the *training* of the disciples for their work; in the present it is connected with the *execution* of the work. First of all, the Advocate 'will bear witness' concerning Jesus, will perform that work of witnessing which belongs to heralds of the Cross. *But He will do this in them.* We are not to imagine that His is an independent work, carried on directly in the world, and apart from the instrumentality of the disciples. It is true that there is a general influence of the Holy Spirit by which He prepares the ear to hear and the eye to see—such an influence as that with which He wrought in Judaism, and even in heathenism; but that is not the influence of which Jesus speaks in the words before us. It is a specific influence, the *power* of the Spirit, to which He refers—that influence which, exerted through Himself when He was upon the earth, is now exerted through the members of His body. In the two last verses of this chapter, therefore, we have not two works of witnessing, the first that of the Advocate, the second that of the disciples. We have only one—outwardly that of the disciples, inwardly that of the Advocate. Hence the change of tense from the future to the present when Jesus speaks of 'ye:' the Advocate 'will bear witness,' ye 'bear witness.' The two witnessings are not on parallel lines, but on the same line, the former coming to view only in and by the latter, into which the power of the former is introduced. Hence also the force of the emphatic 'Ye.' The personality and freedom of the disciples does not disappear under this operation of the Advocate; they do not become mechanical agents, but retain their individual standing; they are still men, only higher than they could otherwise have been. Hence, finally, the reason assigned for the part given to the disciples in the work; they are from the beginning 'with Jesus,' with Him as partners and fellow-workers; and this 'from the beginning,' that is, from the beginning which belongs to the subject in hand—the beginning of His ministry.—The 26th verse of this chapter is often thought to be of great importance in regard to the doctrine of the 'Procession' of the Holy Spirit, the Greek Church finding in it its leading argument for maintaining that that

16: 1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye
2 should not be made to stumble. They shall put you
out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that
whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth ser-

'Procession' is only from the Father, not from the Son. So far as this text is concerned, the question resolves itself into the further one, Is Jesus here speaking of the *Person* or of the *office* of the Advocate, of the *source* of His being or of His *operation?* Attention to the preposition used with 'the Father' ought at once to decide this point. It is 'from,' not 'out of,' that is employed: it is of office and operation, not of being and essence, that Jesus speaks (comp. chaps. 1: 6, 14; 7: 29; 9: 16; 10: 18; 16: 27; 17: 8). The words 'which goeth forth from the Father' are not intended to express any metaphysical relation between the First and Third Persons of the Trinity, but to lead our thoughts back to the fact that, as it is the distinguishing characteristic of Jesus that He comes from the Father, so One of like Divine power and glory is now to take His place. The same words 'from the Father' are again added to 'I will send,' because the Father is the ultimate source from which the Spirit as well as the Son 'goes forth,' and really the Giver of the Spirit through the Son who asks for Him (comp. chap. 14: 16). In the power of this Spirit, therefore, the connection of the disciples with the Father will, in the time to come, be not less close, and their strength from the Father not less efficacious, than it had been while Jesus was Himself beside them. The emphasis on the 'I' of 'I will send' ought not to pass unnoticed. It is as if Jesus would say: 'You tremble at the prospect of my going away, you fear that you will be desolate; but it is not so. *I* will not forget you; *I* will be to you, through the Spirit, all that I have been; *I* will send the Advocate to be in you and by your side.' Could more be necessary to sustain them? The consolation offered reaches here its culminating point; but all has yet to be made clearer, fuller, more impressive; and to effect this, not to introduce new teaching, our Lord proceeds to the second of the double pictures of this part of His discourse.

Chap. 16: 1. The 'things' referred to are especially those described in chap. 15: 18–27, and the verse is a pause (not the introduction of a new idea) before the same subject is resumed: there is no change either of circumstances or of topic: the difference between this passage and the earlier is simply one climax. Vers. 1–6 correspond to chap. 15: 18–25; vers. 7–11, to vers. 26, 27, of the same chapter. The word 'make to stumble' is used in this Gospel only in one other passage, 6: 61. It points to the danger of having faith and constancy shaken by trial instead of standing firm in allegiance to Jesus, whatever might be the difficulties encountered in His service.

Ver 2. It is of Jews that Jesus speaks, and the figure is therefore naturally taken from Jewish customs; but opposition on the part of

3 vice unto God. And these things will they do, be-
4 cause they have not known the Father, nor me. But
these things have I spoken unto you, that when their
hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told
you. And these things I said not unto you from the

Jews is in these discourses the type of all opposition to the truth. On the severity of the trial alluded to in the first clause of the verse, see on chap. 9: 22. Yet not merely excommunication, but death in every one of its varied forms shall be their portion. Nay, they shall even be regarded by their murderers as a sacrifice to be offered to God; they shall be slain as a part of the worship due to Him 'Every one who sheds the blood of the impious is as if He offered a sacrifice,' is said to have been a Jewish maxim. Not in indifference only or in lightness of spirit shall they be slain, to make a Jewish or a Roman holiday, when perhaps their fate might be mourned over in soberer hours, but in such a manner that those who slay them shall return from the scene as men who have engaged in what they believe will gain for them the favor of heaven. It is impossible to imagine a darker picture of fanaticism. Yet the picture is heightened by the mention of 'an hour,' an hour laden with the divine purpose, which must 'come' to them as it had come to Jesus Himself.

Ver. 3. **And these things will they do, because they know not the Father, nor me.** The root of the opposition, as formerly spoken of, 15: 21.

Ver. 4. The analogy of such passages as chaps. 2: 22; 12: 16; 14: 26, seems to show that the 'remembering' here spoken of is not an effort of memory alone. It involves the deeper insight given by experience and the teaching of the Spirit into the meaning and purpose of trial in the economy of grace. The disciples shall so remember that they shall have a fresh insight into the mystery of the Cross. Nay more, they shall learn to feel themselves peculiarly identified with their Lord.—**And these things I told you not from the beginning, because I was with you.** Had Jesus, then, not told them these things in the earliest period of His ministry? It is often urged that passages such as Matt 5: 10; 9: 15; 10: 16, show us that He had, and that it is impossible to reconcile these with the words before us. Yet there is no contradiction. It is not merely that He now speaks, or that they now understand, with greater clearness than before. His 'going away' is an essential part of 'these things,' and with it all that He now says is so connected that it has its meaning only in the light of that departure. That they would have to take His place, and, in doing so, to find that His trials were their trials, He had never said. That solemn lesson was connected only with the present moment, when their training was completed, and they were to be sent forth to be as He had been.

5 beginning, because I was with you. But now I go
unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me,
6 Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken
these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.
7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for
you that I go away: for if I go not away, the [1]Com-

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[1] Or, *Advocate.* Or, *Helper.* Gr. *Paraclete.*

Vers. 5, 6. The disciples had looked upon His departure simply as a departure from themselves, and had failed to enter into all the glorious consequences connected with it. Thus they had been overwhelmed with sorrow. It is true that, at chap. 13: 36, Peter had asked 'Whither goest thou away?' But he had done this with no sufficient thought of the 'Whither': the parting, not the goal to which Jesus went, had been in his mind. The suitable words might have been used, but not with the spirit and feeling which they ought to have expressed. This state of mind Jesus has now in view, and to it He refers with a certain sadness before He points out that His departure was not less a cause of rejoicing to His disciples than it was to Himself (comp. 16: 22; 17: 13).

Ver. 7. Sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples at the thought of the departure of their Lord. Now, therefore, in these His crowning teachings, not only must their sorrow be dispelled, but they must be sent forth with the joyful assurance that His departure shall secure to them the most glorious strength in their conflict with the world, and the final possession of the victory. The great truths now are: (1) That the departure of Jesus is the indispensable condition of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit; (2) That through such bestowal the world with which the disciples must contend shall become to them not only a conquered, but a self-convicted, foe. The first of these truths comes before us in ver. 7, the second in vers. 8-11. In ver. 1, along with ver. 5, three different words are used to express the idea of 'going away' or 'going.' Between the first two there is probably little difference, although the second may bring less markedly into view than the first the *mere* thought of departure. The third, in the words 'if I go,' is distinguished from both of them in that it distinctly expresses not so much the thought of departure as that of going to the Father (comp. chaps. 14: 2, 3, 12, 28; 16: 28). The glorification of Jesus, then, is here clearly in view; and this passage teaches the same lesson as chap. 7: 39, that upon that glorification the bestowal of the power of the Spirit was dependent (comp. on chap. 7: 39). Not that the Holy Spirit had been given in no degree before. He had certainly wrought in Judaism, and had even been the Author of all the good that had ever appeared in heathenism: but He had not been given *in power*, had not been the essential characteristic of an era in which He had made only scattered and isolated manifestations of His influences.

forter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will
8 send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will
convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteous-

It was to be different now. The era to begin was the era of the Spirit, in which He was to breathe a new life into the world. The end of all God's dealings with man is that he shall be brought into the closest and most perfect union with Himself, and that, in order to do this, He shall be spiritualized and glorified. This is effected through Him who took human nature into communion with the Divine, and the end of whose course is not the Incarnation, but His being made 'the first-born' among many brethren so spiritualized, so glorified. Only, therefore, when this end is reached is Jesus, as not only Son of God but Son of man (3: 14, 15), in full possession of the Spirit; only then is He so set free from the conflicts and the troubles of the time of His 'sufferings' (Heb. 2: 10; 5: 8) that His own spiritual power and glory are illimitable and unconditioned; only then can He bestow in His fulness that Spirit which, as the essential characteristic of His own final, perfect state, is to raise us to the similar end which the purpose of God contemplates with regard to us. In this sense the Holy Spirit not only was not but could not be given so long as Jesus was on earth, unglorified. But then, when, as Son of man glorified, and still, because Son of man, in closest fellowship with us who are men. He should have in Himself all the power of the Spirit,—then would He be able—and how could they who knew His love doubt that He would be willing?—to pour forth upon His disciples that 'Spirit of glory and of God' which should make them more than conquerors over all their adversaries. Surely it was 'expedient' for them that He should 'go away,' and, in going away, 'go' to the Father. Nay, it was better for them that He should 'go away' than that He should remain; for not only was this fulness of the Spirit connected with His glorified condition, but the disciples, instead of leaning on Him as they had done, would gain all that strengthening of character which flows from working ourselves rather than having work done for us by another.

Ver. 8. **And he, when he is come, will convict the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment.** The Agent has been spoken of; we now enter upon His work, and the climax from chap. 15: 26, where the same aspect of the Spirit's work is spoken of, is clearly perceptible. We are not to understand by the word 'convict' either simply 'reprove' or 'convince.' It is much more than both, and implies that answer of conscience to the reproving convincing voice, by which a man condemns himself (3: 20, 8: 26). The word 'concerning' also is not the same as 'of.' The inference to be drawn from these considerations (comp. also on chap. 14: 30, 31), is that in the conviction of the world here spoken of its conversion is not necessarily implied. Conversion

9 ness, and of judgement of sin, because they believe not
10 on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father,
11 and ye behold me no more; of judgement, because the

may or may not follow for anything here stated. The promise now given to the disciples is not that they shall convert the world, but that it shall be silenced, self-condemned, overwhelmed with shame and confusion of face. The Judge of all the earth is upon their side; He will judge for them.

Vers. 9-11. **Concerning sin, because they believe not in me: and concerning righteousness, because I go away to the Father, and ye no longer behold me: and concerning judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.** The general work of conviction to be effected by the Spirit having been stated in ver. 8, the several particulars are next explained more fully. The point of view from which all are to be looked at is that of the controversy with the world in which Jesus had Himself been engaged. So long as He was on the earth this controversy was left unsettled; but after His departure, His disciples, in the power of the promised Advocate, shall bring it to a triumphant issue. The first part of that controversy had reference to sin. The world had cast on Jesus the imputation of sin (5: 18; 7: 20, etc.); and, on the other hand, His whole work and life had been first directed to bring the charge of sin home to the world. But the world had no just idea of what sin was. It thought of gross violations of the Divine law, or of violations of positive religious ceremonial: of sin in its true sense, not only as a departure from truth and love, but as even a failing to recognise and welcome these with all the affection of the heart and devotion of the life, it had no idea. The Advocate shall convict the world of wrong in its estimate of Jesus, and thus also in its estimate of itself. He shall bring home to the world the fact that it believed not in Jesus, did not trust itself to Him as the impersonation of Divine truth and love, and that in this lay sin, nay, the very essence and root of all sin, for it is really a rejection of the Father manifested in Jesus—it is hating the light and choosing the darkness (3: 21, etc). Thus it was unnecessary to speak of other sins: this was the crowning sin, inclusive of them all. The second part of the controversy of Jesus with the world had reference to righteousness:—in what righteousness really lay, what the true nature of righteousness was. The world boasted of its righteousness; Jesus had pronounced that righteousness to be worthless (Matt. 5: 20, etc). Again, which of them is right? The Advocate, working in the disciples, will bring home to the world the truth that, notwithstanding its rejection of Jesus, the Father has received Him, and has set His seal upon Him as His Righteous One. Hence the last words of ver. 10, 'because I go to the Father, and ye no longer behold me,' gently explain that what brought such grief to those who were now to be separated from

12 prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet

their Lord was the very means of accomplishing the great purpose that the Father had in view—the settlement of the controversy as to His Son, and the manifestation of what the Son really was. The third part of the work of conviction is that of judgment. The world had judged Jesus; but He, on the other hand, had judged the world; and His judgment would be proved to be just when the Advocate should enable the disciples to bring home to the world that it was founded upon eternal reality and truth. Then should it see that its very prince had been judged in a manner against which there was no appeal, and that, instead of being the conqueror, he had throughout been the conquered. Then should the world be constrained to confess that it had been madly attempting to reverse the position of the everlasting scales, and had been foiled in the attempt. Such, then, is the great work of the Holy Spirit upon the world during the whole period that was to pass between the departure of Jesus to His Father and His coming again in glory. It is the same work which Jesus had Himself carried on, that is now completed by the 'other' Advocate. The difference does not lie so much in the nature as in the effect of the work: to the one period belongs the beginning of the controversy; to the other the final decision. The conviction is not primarily a work of conversion (although it may lead to conversion): it is a work that confounds and overwhelms the world when, as God gives His judgments unto the King and His righteousness unto the King's Son, 'they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust' (Ps. 72: 9).

Ver. 12. Jesus is about to draw His instructions and consolations to a close. He does so by returning to the great promise of the Spirit already given in chap. 14: 26. Yet there is a difference between the promise there and here; and the difference, as usual, is one of climax. Teaching of a higher kind is now to be referred to, for the element of *experience* comes in. It is not enough to have been taught by Jesus Himself. The disciples were to take their Master's place, and to carry on His work. The Spirit, then, who had been His strength, must be also theirs. Thus it is not so much new teaching that they need as the old teaching in a new way, brought home to their hearts with a new power. It is, indeed, often supposed that the 'many things' here spoken of refer to new truths. This seems improbable. We can hardly suppose that Jesus had reserved any large part of His revelation especially when He had so often spoken of the revelation of 'the Father,' as if it contained the sum and substance of religious truth. Besides this, in the words of Jesus 'all things' are implicitly contained (comp. on chap. 14 : 26). And, further, the word 'bear' does not mean to apprehend: it is to bear as a burden, and the most glorious and encouraging truths may become a burden to one too immature to bear them. Not, therefore, because the disciples could not in a certain sense even now understand further revelation, 13 many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of trut is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, *these* shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall

but because they had not yet the Christian experience to give that revelation power, does Jesus say that they cannot bear the many things that He has yet to say unto them. When shall they, or when shall the Church, be able to understand them? The answer is, When at any stage of their or her future history the 'many things' are needed, and so may have their power felt. But just because of this they need not be, as the whole context teaches us they are not to be, *new* truths. They are old truths made new, expanded, unfolded (as we see especially in the Epistles of Paul), illuminated by receiving light from the lessons of history, when these are read in the spirit of Christian trust and confidence and hope, but not wholly new. There will not be in them one revelation, strictly so called, that was not in the words of Jesus Himself: but their ever greater depths shall be seen as the relations of the Church and of the world respectively become more complex. It has been so in the past: it will be so in the future. There is no reason to think the treasure in the words of Jesus will ever be exhausted: it contains, according to the seeming paradox of the apostle, what we are 'to know,' although it 'passeth knowledge' (Eph. 3: 19). This is the true development of Christian insight and experience, not the false development of Rome.

Ver. 13. **But when he is come, the Spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth: for he will not speak from himself; but whatsoever things he shall hear, he will speak: and he will declare to you the things that are coming.** These words lend strong confirmation to what has been said on the previous verse. For this work of the Spirit is evidently different from that of chaps. 15: 26; 16: 7; the first pair of these passages relating to preparation for the work, the second to the discharge of its duties, while this relates to something to be given in the midst of these duties and their corresponding trials. Further, 'He shall guide' implies not merely that He shall show the way, but that He shall Himself experimentally go before them in the way (Matt 16: 14; Luke 6: 39; Acts 8: 31; Rev. 7: 17). It will thus be observed that we are again led to think, not of new revelation, but of earlier teaching deepened by experience. The view now taken is strengthened by two important particulars in this verse:—(1) The unexpected use of 'for' in the clause 'for He shall not speak from Himself.' This word, so closely binding the clauses together, makes it plain that 'all the truth' can be nothing else than the truth of which Jesus was the

14 glorify me for he shall take of mine, and shall
15 declare *it* unto you. All things whatsoever the
Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh

Proclaimer: 'all the truth,' He would say, 'which I have proclaimed, of which I am Myself the substance (14: 6).' 'He will guide you, for it is not from Himself that He will speak: He comes as *My Representative*, not for new and independent offices of grace: He will carry on *My* work.' (2) When it is said, 'He hears,' we are not told whence He hears. It is possible that it may be from the Father; but when we call to mind that the unity of the Father and the Son is a leading thought in this discourse (comp. 14: 23, 26, and especially 15: 26), it seems highly probable that the mention of the Source whence the Spirit hears is designedly omitted Thus we are led to think not of the Father only, but of the Father and the Son, and again the revelation given is bounded by what Jesus has Himself revealed. The last clause of the verse may indeed, at first sight, appear inconsistent with this view. Are not 'the things to come' new revelations? We answer that in no strict sense of the words are they so. Even should we suppose that Jesus speaks of such things as 'the things to come' of the Apocalypse (chap. 1: 19), these properly interpreted are not so much revelations wholly new, as new applications of what had already been revealed, and in particular of that very controversy between the Church and the world of which the mind of Jesus was now full. 'The things that are coming' are the things that happen when 'He who is to come' begins in the power of His Spirit the great conflict carried on throughout all the ages of the Christian Church in her militant condition: and the whole verse thus refers not to new revelations, but to revelations made new by the teaching of Christian experience.

Ver. 14. **He shall glorify me, because of that which is mine will he receive and will declare it unto you.** On the glorifying of Jesus here spoken of, see on chap. 13: 31. This glory will be given Him by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in the Church, *because* that which the Spirit applies for the ever increasing growth and efficiency of the Church is only a fuller unfolding of 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' To Him as the Alpha and Omega of our faith, and never beyond Him, the Spirit leads us.

Ver. 15. **All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that he receiveth of that which is mine, and will declare it unto you.** It is of Himself as Son of man as well as Son of God, not of Himself only as the Eternal Son, that Jesus speaks. In that capacity 'all things whatsoever' had been given Him by the Father. Therefore might He well say in the previous verse that, in leading His disciples onward to the ultimate goal of the Divine purposes, the Spirit would do this by receiving and declaring of that which was *His*. What was so received and declared would not fall short, therefore, of leading them into the highest truth—the truth as to 'the Father.'

16 of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you. A little while
and ye behold me no more; and again a little while,
17 and ye shall see me. *Some* of his disciples therefore
said one to another, What is this that he saith unto
us, a little while, and ye behold me not; and again a
little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to
18 the Father? They said therefore, What is this that
he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith.
19 Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him,
and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves
concerning this, that I said, A little while, and
ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye
20 shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye
shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:
ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned

Ver. 16. **A little while and ye behold me no longer; and again a little while, and ye shall see me.** Trial has been spoken of and encouragement given. That both shall *soon* be known is the transition to the present verse. The difference between the verbs 'behold' and 'see' must determine the meaning of the words, the former here denoting (as 14: 19) vision with the bodily, the latter vision with the spiritual, eye. The time closing the first 'little while' is the death of Christ, when 'not beholding' begins' the time closing; the second 'little while' dates from the resurrection, when the 'seeing' begins and continues for ever (comp. 14: 19). After the death of their Lord the disciples shall be in the position of the world (13: 13); under the saddening influence of that event their faith shall wane, and all the joy experienced in His presence shall disappear. But He whom they had thought lost for ever shall enter at His resurrection on a glorified existence, from which He shall send to them that Advocate in whom and through whom He shall be always with them, and they with Him.

Vers. 17, 18. The perplexity of the disciples is natural, and it is occasioned not only by the last words actually used by Jesus, but by what had been so prominent a point in the previous part of His discourse, that He was going away to the Father (ver. 10). They fear, however, to ask a direct explanation, and some of them discuss the matter among themselves.

Vers. 19, 20. Jesus entered at once into their difficulties, and proceeded to explain more fully what He meant, not indeed dwelling most upon the 'little while,' but upon the great and sudden contrasts of mind to be experienced by them, and previously hinted at in the words 'behold' and 'see.'

21 into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath
sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she
is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more
the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the
22 world. And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I
will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and
23 your joy no one taketh away from you. And in that
day ye shall [1]ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say
unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he
24 will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked
nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that
your joy may be fulfilled.

[1] Or, *ask me no question.*

Ver. 21. An illustration familiar to all, but drawn out of the very heart of Old Testament life and feeling (Isa. 21 : 3 ; 26 : 17 ; 66 : 7 ; Ps. 128 : 3 : Ezek. 19 : 10). Yet there is more in the language than meets the eye at first sight, and its peculiarities form a valuable proof of the correctness of the interpretation given above by the twice repeated 'little while.' For (1) the expression her 'hour' is come, alludes to the crucifixion as the 'hour' of Jesus, that of His deepest sorrow and the sorrow of His disciples. And (2) the use of the word 'man' instead of child hints at the new birth of regenerated humanity in the moment when Jesus Himself arose from the grave.*

Ver. 22. At ver. 19 Jesus had said 'ye shall see me,' but now He says 'I will see you.' It is the blessed reciprocity of intercourse between Him and His own. From the moment of the resurrection He will see them, and they shall see Him, and shall rise to the full brightness of that position to which He elevates His people. Nor will this 'seeing' terminate with the ascension, for it is their spiritual vision that is mainly thought of. In the power of the Spirit He will see them and they Him, and they shall rejoice with a triumphant and abiding joy.

Vers. 23, 24. **And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto, ye asked nothing in my name, ask, and ye shall**

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[* Lange takes the same view: "The death of Christ is the agonizing travail of humanity, from which labor the God-Man issues, glorified, to the eternal joy of the whole body of mankind." Similarly Chrysostom, Olshausen, Alford. The words are applicable also to the travails of the Church in bringing forth children of God. Yet we should overlook the immediate reference. A touching and most comforting proof of our Saviour's tender sympathy with woman's deepest trial (Gen. 3 : 16) and highest joy.—P. S.]

25 These things have I spoken unto you in [1]proverbs:
the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto
you in [1]proverbs,* but shall tell you plainly of the
26 Father. In that day ye shall ask in my name: and
I say not unto you, that I will [2]pray the Father for
27 you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye
have loved me, and have believed that I came forth

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[1] Or, *parables*. [2] Gr. *make request of*.

* For "proverbs" read "dark sayings."—*Am. Com.*

**receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.** The two verbs here rendered 'ask a question' [ἀρωτάω] and 'ask' [αἰτέω] are different; and though the former may be used of prayer when *our Lord* 'asks; the Father (17: 9, 15, 20), it seems impossible to separate the use of 'ask a question' in ver. 23 from its use in ver. 19 and again in ver. 30, in both which passages it refers to asking information upon points occasioning perplexity to the mind. The declaration of Jesus thus is, that in the day when the joy of the disciples is perfected they will not need to feel that they must have Him beside them to solve their difficulties. They will then be so entirely in Him, one with Him, that along with Him they will have such a full knowledge from the Holy Spirit—a knowledge belonging to His 'day'—as will exclude the need of such questions. But this full knowledge will do more. If it restrains the questioning of ignorance, it at the same time opens their eyes to see better all their true need, and the source from which it shall be supplied. Therefore, not in a spirit of curious questioning but in a spirit of perfect trust let them approach the Father, for He will give to them 'in the name' of Jesus. He has revealed Himself to them in Jesus as their Father; He has made them in Him His own sons; therefore shall they receive as sons, and nothing shall be awanting to the fulfilment of their joy.

Ver. 25. Jesus is now about to close His last discourse. At this point, accordingly, He refers to the method of teaching, of which He was giving them illustration at the moment, for the purpose of bringing out by contrast the glory of the period upon which the disciples were about to enter. On the word 'proverbs,' comp. on 10: 6. The contrast suggested is not between figurative and direct speech, or between enigmatical and clear sayings, but between outward teaching of every kind and that internal teaching which comes from the illuminating influence of the Spirit of God, and which is the best, the only true, teaching. The Spirit shall be given after Jesus goes away, and the disciples shall see in their own free and independent insight what as yet they received only upon the authority of their Master.

Vers. 26, 27. In these words the encouragement that He would give to His disciples reaches its highest point. They are assured that they shall stand in such unity of love with the Father that the Father

28 from the Father. I came out from the Father, and
am come into the world: again, I leave the world,
29 and go unto the Father. His disciples say, Lo, now
speakest thou plainly, and speakest no [1]proverb.*
30 Now know we that thou knowest all things, and

[1] Or, *parable.*

* For "proverb" read "dark saying."—*Am. Com.*

shall embrace them in constant affection as His sons, that they as sons shall approach directly to Him as their Father, and that in that intercourse there shall come to them every blessing which the fulness of Divine love can supply. The verse will best be understood by contrasting it with the words of 14: 16. There Jesus had said that He would *ask* the Father, and He would give them another Advocate. Here He says that He will not need to ask for this Advocate on their behalf; and why? *Because the Advocate has come,* because He has taken full possession of their hearts, because it is His 'day.' What is the consequence? They will ask 'in the name' of Jesus; that is, the habit of their mind is that of prayer as persons who, through the revelation of the Father in the Son, know the Father to be their Father. Further, Jesus will not need to ask concerning them, for the Father needs no one to remind Him of His children. Lastly, the Father Himself will enfold them in His love, because in faith and love they have been united to the Son with whom He is one. It is an ideal state, the perfected state of the Church of Christ under the teaching of the Spirit; a state not yet reached by her amidst her many sins and weaknesses. Nevertheless the state is one not the less ideally true, because not yet reached; and not the less to be kept before us as the hope of our calling to that glorious issue, when all contradictions and disharmonies shall be done away, and when, through the power of the Spirit, the one unity of Father, Son, and redeemed man shall be completely realized.

Ver. 28. **I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father.** The discourse is about to close, and it does so in the manner of which we have had so many illustrations, by returning again to the leading truths that had been spoken of. The words before us are accordingly a summary of the whole history of Jesus in the light of His redeeming work, from the period of His pre-existent state in the bosom of the Father to the period when He shall again return to His everlasting rest in Him. He came that He might lead men to the Father; He goes that they may be perfected in the Spirit, and that He may prepare a place for them in the many places of abode in the Father's house.

Vers. 29, 30. Two entirely different views may be taken of the feelings and language of the disciples as here described. Either they are really led into a sudden knowledge of the truth, thus afford-

needest not that any man should ask thee: by this
31 we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus
32 answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the
hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered,
every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and
*yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye
may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation:
but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

ing a striking illustration of darkness dispelled and of heavenly light shining into the heart from the teaching of Jesus, while He again joyfully recognizes their faith and beholds in it an earnest of completed victory; or the disciples misunderstand themselves, and confess their faith in a manner which, though sincere, is so imperfect that Jesus is constrained to speak to them in words of warning. The latter view is that which deserves acceptance. The disciples' words, 'now we know,' contrasting with the promise of ver. 23, a promise relating to the future, are obviously hasty; there was nothing clearer in the latest words of Jesus than in words often uttered by Him before; and, above all, the confession proves itself by its very terms to be imperfect, inadequate, inferior to that of a true faith. The disciples think that they believe; but they do not believe in such a way as will alone enable them to stand in the midst of coming trial. They persuade themselves that even 'now' their faith is all that it need be; and they must be warned and reproved.

Vers. 31, 32. The view taken of the preceding verse leads to the conclusion that the first clause of this verse is interrogative, not affirmative, and the conclusion is favored by 6: 70; 13: 38. The meaning of the reply is: 'You anticipate the time, you deceive yourselves; this faith of yours, sincere and real up to a certain point though it be, needs deepening and perfecting. It will be deepened and perfected in such a way that no trial will be too hard for it—but not yet; rather the hour cometh, and is come, when you shall all forsake Me in the time of My greatest need, and shall think only selfishly of yourselves. Yet, notwithstanding, even then, when to all appearance alone, I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

Ver. 33. 'These things' refers to all that had been spoken from chap. 14: 1, to the thought of which beginning of His discourse Jesus now returns at its close. The present tense, 'ye have,' seems to indicate that tribulation is not merely a historical certainty, but the natural consequence of the position of the disciples in the world. It must, as well as will, be so. The world is a conquered foe. Jesus has overcome it, and that not for Himself only, but for them. His faithful disciples have still sorrow in the world, but their sorrow is turned

## CHAPTER 17: 1–26.

### *The Intercessory or High-priestly Prayer of Jesus.*

1 These things spake Jesus; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify

into joy; they have still to wage a warfare in the world, but each part of the field resounds with their exulting shouts, and the very death which the world may bring to them is the gate of higher and more glorious life. The world is not to be overcome: it is overcome; and to those who follow in the footsteps of their Lord, the path through is not so much a conflict as a victory. As reapers in the harvest field, they rejoice together with Him who sowed (iv. 36); as soldiers of the cross, they share the triumph of the Captain of their salvation.

*The Intercessory or High-priestly Prayer of Jesus*, vers. 1–26.

CONTENTS.—The chapter on which we now enter contains what is generally known as our Lord's High-priestly Prayer. Such a name is appropriately given it; partly, because it is the longest and most solemn utterance recorded of the intercessions with which Jesus approached the throne of His heavenly Father on His people's behalf; partly, because He was at this moment standing on the threshold of His especial work as their great High Priest. No attempt to describe the prayer can give a just idea of its sublimity, its pathos, its touching yet exalted character, its tone at once of tenderness and triumphant expectation. We are apt to read it as if it were full of sorrow; but that is only our own feeling reflected back upon what we suppose to have been the feelings of the Man of Sorrows. In the prayer itself sorrow has no place; and to think that it was uttered in a tone of sadness is entirely to mistake what must have been the spirit of Jesus at the time. It speaks throughout of work accomplished, of victory gained, of the immediate expectation of glorious reward. It tells, not of sorrow, but of 'joy,' joy now possessing His own soul, and about to be 'fulfilled' in His disciples (ver. 13). It anticipates with perfect confidence the realization of the grand object of His coming,—the salvation of all that have been given Him (ver. 12), their union to Himself and the Father (ver. 21), their security amidst the evils of this world while they execute in it a mission similar to His (vers. 11, 15, 18), and, finally, their glorification with His own glory (ver. 24). The prayer, in fact, corresponds closely with the words of its Utterer immediately preceding it, 'Be of good courage, I have overcome the world' (chap. 16: 33). It is nothing less than a prolonged anticipation of the shout of triumph on the cross, 'It is finished' (chap. 19: 30). The prayer divides itself naturally into three parts, in the first of which Jesus prays for Himself, in the second for His immediate disciples, in the third for all who, in every age, shall believe in Him. But the three parts are pervaded by one thought —the glorification of the Father in those successively prayed for, by the accomplishment in each of the Father's purpose, and the union of all in the perfect, the spiritual, the eternal bond of love. The subordinate parts of the chapter are thus—(1) vers. 1–5; (2) vers. 6–19; (3) vers. 20–26.

[Here is holy ground; here is the gate of heaven. No such prayer was ever heard before or since. It could be uttered only by the Lord and Saviour of men, the mighty Intercessor and Mediator, standing between heaven and earth before His wondering disciples. Even He could pray it only once, in the most momentous crisis of history, in full view of the approaching sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, which occurred but once, though its effect vibrates through all ages. It is not so much the petition of an inferior suppliant as a dialogue with an equal, and a solemn declaration of His will and His mission. He intercedes with the eternal Jehovah as the partner of His counsel, as the executor of His will of saving mercy. He looks back to His pre-mundane glory with God and forward to the resumption of that glory, and comprehends all His present and future disciples in unbroken succession as a holy and blessed brotherhood in vital union with Himself and His Father. While speaking to the Father, He teaches the disciples who were to carry on His work to the grand consummation. The nearest parallel to this prayer of consecration is the Thanksgiving in Matt. 11: 25 sqq. John probably made a very early memorandum of all the principal discourses of His Lord. The prayer was not uttered in the upper chamber which was left after chap. 14: 31, nor in the streets of Jerusalem, but either in some quiet retreat beneath the sky, or in the Temple Court on Mt. Moriah which He may have passed on the way to the garden of Gethsemane (18: 1). The alleged inconsistency of the supreme serenity of this prayer and the deep depression of the agony in Gethsemane is only apparent. The one represents the divine side, the other the human side of the same crisis. In principle and spirit the victory was already gained (13: 31); in point of fact it was yet to be achieved through the terrible sufferings of the approaching hours (14: 30). Sudden transitions and alternations of feeling in critical trials are frequent in human experience, and as Dr. Westcott says (in his *Com.*, p. 237) made "more intelligible by the absolute insight and foresight of Christ." He could see, as man cannot do, both the completeness of his triumph and the suffering through which it was to be gained. Something of the same kind is seen in the conflict of deep emotion joined with words of perfect confidence at the grave of Lazarus (11: 11, 23, 35, 38, 40 sqq.); and again on the occasion of the visit of the Greeks (12: 23, 27 sq., 30 sqq.). The words of the Sacerdotal Prayer are simple, clear, calm and serene, but the thoughts are as broad and deep as God's infinite love, and all efforts to exhaust their meaning only make us feel the more keenly our inability to fathom their depth and to reach their height. For some remarkable judgments of distinguished divines on this unique chapter in this unique Gospel, see Lange's *Com.*, p. 512.—P. S.]

Ver. 1. **These things spake Jesus, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said.** Thus the Evangelist connects the prayer before us with the parting discourse contained in the previous chapters. It is offered in the same place, while the disciples stand around, and in the same frame of mind as that in which Jesus had just spoken; so that, when we read of His 'lifting up His eyes to heaven,' we must think of them as full alike of holy devotion and of the consciousness of completed victory.—**Father, the hour is come.** The first word of the prayer is 'Father;' not 'our Father' as in the Lord's Prayer, but simply 'Father,' and so throughout, though twice with 'righteous' or 'holy' connected with the same (vers. 5, 11, 21, 24, 25). The

2 thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal

word sums up the peculiar revelation of this Gospel, and expresses the whole consciousness of that relation to God in which 'the only-begotten Son' stood, and would have us to stand. Yet it is not a word of tenderness only, but of authority and power: if it stirs affection, it awakens also reverence and awe. 'The hour' referred to is not merely that of death, or of death as a transition to glory; it is that in which the Son makes perfect the accomplishment of the Father's will (comp. 2: 4; 7: 30; 8: 20; 13: 32). This no doubt involves alike the death and the exaltation of Jesus, but it is the inner character of the hour, rather than its outward accompaniments, that is mainly referred to in the words, 'The hour is come.'—**Glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee.** On the meaning of 'glorify' compare what has been said at 13: 31, 32. It is not a bestowal of personal glory for which Jesus prays, for such a thought would be out of keeping with the mind of Him who never sought His own glory, and would compel us to understand the word 'glorify' in the first clause in a sense wholly different from any that can be given it in the second. What Jesus prays for is, that the Father would now withdraw the veil which had hitherto obscured to some, and concealed from others, the 'glory' belonging to the Son's unity of relation to the Father, in order that that 'glory' of the Father Himself, which is the end of all existence, and which can be seen only in the Son, may thus shine forth in the sight of His creatures without any shadow to dim its brightness. The former is the means, the latter is the end (comp. 11: 4). The transition from 'Thy Son' to 'the Son' is worthy of notice, the former including an appeal to personal relationship, the latter bringing especially into view the work by which Jesus 'declares' the Father (comp. 1: 18), and leads men into the condition and privileges of sonship (comp. 1: 12).

Ver. 2. **Even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, in order that all that which thou hast given him, he may give unto them life eternal.** This verse is clearly connected with ver. 1. It unfolds the means by which the glorifying of the Father is to be accomplished; and the first clause corresponds' to 'glorify' Thy Son,' the second to 'that the Son may glority Thee.' To the Son the Father gave authority over all flesh, that the Son on His part might give to them eternal life. The words 'all flesh' (the Old Testament expression for 'all men') here used are remarkable. No words could more powerfully bring out that universality which is so characteristic of this Gospel and this prayer; while, at the same time, they set before us the picture of all humanity, Gentile as well as Jewish, in its weakness and sinfulness, in its want of the power of the Spirit, in its separation from that spiritual and eternal life in

3 life. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst

which alone it accomplishes its destiny and attains to the completion of its joy. Over all men the Son received authority that if they would only listen to Him they might be saved: thus the Father glorifies the Son. By the execution of this mission, again, and by the giving of life eternal to all believers, the Son glorifies the Father. The commission, in short, was glory to the Son: the execution was glory to the Father: and the prayer is, that the loving purpose of the Father may be accomplished in the visible glory properly belonging to it. The peculiar structure of this verse, by which Jesus first presents those spoken of as a connected whole, and then proceeds to refer to them in their more individual aspect, has already been spoken of (see on 6 : 37); and in the commentary on the same passage we have also seen that under the words 'all that which Thou hast given Him,' we are not to think of any absolute, predestinating decree having no regard to the moral and spiritual character of those thus 'given.' Their moral and spiritual state is rather the prominent thought; they are believers; they possess eternal life. It is true that this is to be traced to the 'drawing' of the Father. From Him alone comes every perfect gift; they are in themselves only weak and sinful flesh; but, at the stage at which we view them here, the working of prevenient grace is long since past; the Father has called them, and they have answered the call: then they are viewed as 'given.'

Ver. 3. **And this is the eternal life, that they may learn to know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, Jesus, as Christ.** The article is used before 'eternal life' in order to carry our thoughts back to the 'life eternal' of ver 2; and the conception involved in these words is now dwelt upon in meditation which finds utterance because of the disciples who heard (comp. 11 : 42). Tnerefore when Jesus, with His mind full of the thought of the glorification of the Father and the Son, speaks of the eternal life bestowed upon His people, He turns to the manner in which, through the reception of that life, such a glorification shall be effected by them. Two points must be kept in view while we endeavor to understand the words:—(1) The force of 'that;' this word sets before us the 'knowing' as a goal towards which we are to strain our efforts. (2) That the word 'know' does not mean to know fully or to recognise, but to learn to know: it expresses not perfect, but inceptive and ever-growing knowledge. Those, then, who receive 'eternal life' enter into a condition in which they learn to know the Father and the Son as they really are,—learn to know Them in Their love and saving mercy,—and are thus enabled to 'glorify' Them. The knowledge of the Father and the Son is neither the condition of the 'life' nor the same thing as the 'life.' It is rather that far-off goal which is constantly before us, and to which we come ever nearer, in proportion as we enter more deeply into the life which Christ bestows. The 'life,' on the other hand, is that state in which we are introduced to the knowledge of the Father and the Son, the state in which we learn to know Them with constantly-increasing clearness and fulness, and finally the state in which, when life is perfected in us, we come to know Them as They are, to 'see' Them, and to 'be like' Them (comp. 1 John 3: 2). Strictly speaking, the knowledge is thus dependent on the life, rather than the life on the knowledge. But, in truth, the interdependence is mutual; neither can exist without the other; there is no life which does not lead to knowledge; there is no knowledge without life. The 'eternal life' is thus also a present thing, stretching indeed into the endless future, but begun now. The constituents of the knowledge are also given. They are first to be viewed as two; and each has a distinguishing attributive connected with it. The first is God: He is the 'only true God.' We cannot exclude from these words the thought of a contrast to heathen divinities; for the Gentiles are here present to the mind of Him who prays for *all* that are to believe in Him. But, if so, we must recognize in them an allusion to the cardinal formula of Judaism, 'The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. 6: 4); and the force of such an allusion in its present use we shall see immediately. In addition to this, however, the word 'true' has also its meaning *real*. This God whom we are to know is the foundation of all real being, the God in whom all things are that are, and thus as 'true' the 'only' God. The second constituent of the knowledge is Jesus: He is Christ,—God's anointed One, the Messiah. In a chapter where so much importance is attached to the word 'name,' we are justified in thinking that the name 'Jesus' is here regarded in its proper meaning of 'Saviour:' it expresses what the word 'Me' would not express with anything like similar fulness. These two constituents of the knowledge spoken of are next to be viewed as one; for the fact that the words 'Him whom Thou didst send' precede the name 'Jesus,' as well as the whole teaching of this Gospel, suggests not the thought of God *and* Christ but of God *in* Christ, of God declaring Himself in Him whom He 'sent.' Herein, therefore, lies the truth, that the one God whom Israel so vainly boasted that it knew could only be 'known' in connection with, and by means of the knowledge of, Jesus. Hence, also, we need not wonder that Jesus here names Himself in the third Person instead of the first. He is giving expression in its most purely objective form to the sum of saving knowledge. To effect this the second clause mentioning this knowledge has to be combined with the first: it must, therefore, be presented not less objectively; and thus, seeing this knowledge as it were without Himself, our Lord speaks not of 'Me' but of 'Jesus.' Had such a use been unsuitable to prayer, it would be as difficult to account for it from the pen of the Evangelist (on the supposition that the words are moulded by him) as from the lips of Jesus.*

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* The words of this verse are so important that it may be well to explain more fully

4 send, *even* Jesus Christ. I glorified thee on the earth,
having accomplished the work which thou hast given
5 me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with
thine own self with the glory which I had with thee

Ver. 4. The first petition of Jesus in this prayer had been 'glorify Thy Son.' That petition is now to be repeated in a more emphatic manner (ver. 5), but first we have a fuller statement of the ground on which it rests. In vers. 2, 3, the petition had been connected with the design of the Father; now it is connected with the accomplishment of that design; and the general prayer for glorification is to rise into the prayer 'Glorify Thou Me *now*.' This glorifying of the Father is said to have taken place 'on the earth,' that is, amidst the humiliations and sorrows of the Lord's earthly life. There in word, and deed, and suffering even unto death, Jesus revealed the Father's loving will for the salvation of men; there He accomplished the purpose for which the Father sent Him; there He glorified the Father. All is spoken of as past, for the whole work of Jesus is at this moment looked upon as finished. It is not indeed entirely finished, for He has not yet been nailed to the cross; but that final part of it may still be connected in thought with the whole suffering life, and may be spoken of as if it had been met. All the life of Jesus had been a death; in all of it He had been accomplishing His work and glorifying the Father: the one step still remaining, and already fully taken in will, may thus be easily associated with the rest, and the whole be contemplated as over.

Ver. 5. The glory prayed for is distinguished by two particulars: (1) It is 'with Thine own Self' (comp. 13: 31, 32), in contrast with the words 'on earth' of ver. 4. (2) It is a glory that Jesus had possessed 'before the world was;' that is, from eternity. Thus the prayer is that the clouds which during His earthly life had obscured the glory of His Divine Sonship may be rolled back, and that as Son of man (as well as Son of God) it may now *appear* that He possesses that glory in all the brightness with which it encompassed Him before He came into the world (comp. 13: 32). The word 'glory,' in short, is to be understood in the sense of glory to be *manifested* as well as in

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in a note that in the clauses attached to 'learn to know' there is probably a fusion of two thoughts;

$$\text{learn to know}\begin{cases}\text{that Thou art the only true God.}\\ \text{Thee as the only true God.}\end{cases}$$

$$\text{learn to know}\begin{cases}\text{that Jesus whom thou sentest is Christ.}\\ \text{Jesus whom Thou sentest as Christ.}\end{cases}$$

The predicative 'Christ' requires the verb to express knowledge of a *fact:* the impression given by the verse is that great stress belongs to 'know' in the sense of acquaintance with a *Person.*

6 before the world was. I manifested thy name unto
the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine
they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they
7 have kept thy word. Now they know that all things

a sense expressing the contents of the glory; and the petition is for a bestowal of the manifested glory rather than that of the original real glory considered in itself. Thus the unity of thought in the whole passage is preserved. Not the Son's personal exaltation, but the Father's glory through the Son's, is still the keynote; for, when the glory of the Son is seen the glory of the Father is seen also. With this petition the first section of the prayer closes.

Ver. 6. Jesus now passes to the thought of those disciples who had been led to rest on Him in faith. His work was over; theirs was to begin; and it involved a struggle and needed strength, similar to His own. In tenderest pity and love, therefore, He now prays for them, that they may be preserved as He has been. Yet not their preservation, but the glory of the Father, is still the leading thought. Jesus is glorified in them (ver. 10), and when He is glorified the glorification of the Father is secured. First of all their position is described; they have so entered into and embraced the 'word' of Jesus that the great purpose of His coming has been answered in them, and they are fitted to take His place in the world. That 'word' had been especially the 'name' of God, His name as 'Father,' including His character, His attributes, His saving will as revealed in Jesus. The whole purpose of God's Fatherly love had been embraced by them as tidings of great joy both for themselves and for the world. They had been given to the Son by the Father 'out of the world;' that is, they were no longer in the world as the element of their existence. The position is exactly His own (ver. 14), so that even already we see how closely they are identified with Him, and are fitted, as taking His place, to lift men up into their own higher sphere. **Thine they were, and to me thou gavest them.**—That is the Divine side. The change of order from the same words as used in the earlier part of the verse ought to be noticed. The emphasis is now directed to 'Me,' and the meaning is that they were now by Divine appointment the Son's, that they might take up His work.—**And they have kept thy word.** This is the human side. They, on their part, had answered the purpose of the Father: they had kept the 'word' of God; not the general revelation of His will, but the revelation of the Logos, of the 'Word,' in the soul. In the Word of God they have God's word in them. How completely are they put into the position of Him who is now 'going away!'

Ver. 7. **Now have they learned to know that all things whatsoever thou gavest me are from thee.** These words do more than state that the disciples knew this fact. They include a far deeper meaning, intended to bring out more fully the position of the

8 whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received *them*, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou
9 didst send me. I [1]pray for them: I [1]pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me;

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[1] Gr. *make request.*

disciples as the representatives of Jesus. For what was it that *He* knew? It was that all He had was from the Father; that all He was was the reflex of the Father; that His words, His works, His whole activity, were the Father's; that He came forth from the Father, and was sent by Him into the world (3: 13; 6: 46; 7: 29; 3: 34; 13: 3). This was the consciousness which especially distinguished Him in the fulfilling of His mission; and now that consciousness has passed over into them.

Ver. 8. **Because the words which thou gavest me I have given them, and they received them, and learned to know truly that I came forth from thee, and believed that thou didst send me.** These words explain the fact stated immediately before. The disciples had received a consciousness similar to that of Jesus, because He, on His part, had implanted His words in them: and they, on their part, had responded, receiving what He gave. They 'received,' 'learned to know,' 'believed:' the three verbs, closely following each other in the same tense, correspond to the solemnity of the statement. Again, however, we see that far more is meant than the reception of particular truths: the main thought is, that He has transferred His own mind to His disciples, that He has taught them His own truths and thoughts, and that they, while retaining their own proper individuality (the word *they* before 'received' being equivalent to 'they themselves'), have fully made them their own.

Ver. 9. **I ask concerning them; I ask not concerning the world, but concerning them whom thou hast given me.** In the preceding verses the mind of Jesus has been filled with the thought of the position of the disciples; He now proceeds directly to pray for them; and the substance of His prayer is that they, occupying His place, may be so preserved as to be what He had been—true to the word given them, victorious over the devil, consecrated, filled with joy, to His glory and the glory of the Father in Him. So fully, too, are His thoughts occupied with them, that the whole energy of His prayer is devoted to them alone. He will not for the present ask concerning the enemy to be assailed, but about the assailants who are to take His place. Without denouncing the 'world,' therefore, He simply sets it aside. It may indeed be asked, Why mention it at all? The answer probably is, to bring out that perfect correspondence be-

10 for they are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.
11 And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they

tween the will of the Son and of the Father, which is the ground of the Son's confidence in prayer. Hence the emphatic 'I' with which the verse begins—'I, who came forth from the Father, who am sent of the Father (ver. 8); I, who am the perfect expression of the Father, willing only what He wills—I do not go beyond those whom He has given Me.' This last thought then finds utterance.—**Because they are thine.** In ver. 6 it had been—'They *were* thine;' then they had been looked at only as the possession of the Father. Now 'they *are* thine:' they have been brought back to Him and united to Him in a closer, dearer bond than ever—the bond of fellowship in the Son.

Ver. 10. **And all things that are mine are thine, and thine mine, and I have been glorified in them.** It does not seem necessary to regard the two first clauses of this verse as a parenthesis, and to restrict the last words 'in them' to the disciples only who had been spoken of in ver. 9. Jesus seems rather to be carried away by the thought that disciples one with Him were as truly one with His Father, to another and a more glorious thought, that all that He possessed was His Father's, and all that was His Father's was His, so real, so intimate, so deep is the unity between Them. In all things, then, though (it may be) especially in His disciples, He has been glorified. But His being glorified in them is really the Father's being so, because the glory flows from their recognition of Him, and their fellowship with Him, as the Son. From every thought of the prayer we must ascend to the Father, that glorious Name in which, with its blended authority and love, are given the order and the happiness of all creation.

Ver. 11. **And I am no longer in the world, and they are in the world, and I come to thee.** One thought rising before the mind of Jesus now deepens His earnestness of entreaty on behalf of His disciples—the contrast between their condition and His own. *His* labors and sorrows are over; but *they* are left behind in the struggle which He is leaving. The very greatness of His joy in the thought of His own glorious return to His Father rouses his tenderest sympathy for those who have so much to do and to suffer before they can share His joy.—**Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are.** In ver. 1 we had simply 'Father;' we have now 'Holy' prefixed to that name. The reason is obvious. 'Holy' does not express mere freedom from sin; He who is holy is entirely separated from all that is carnal and outward in this present world, so that pure spirituality and heavenliness alone rule in Him. As, therefore, a state similar to

12 may be one, even as we *are*. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture

this is that to which God would raise His people, the epithet 'Holy' brings this thought prominently into view, and strengthens the argument of the prayer. The petition is that, for the purpose mentioned in the last words of the verse, they may be kept in the Father's name, which He has given to the Son. Light is again thrown upon the word 'name.' It cannot be simply the name 'Father,' for that could not be given to another: it is His revelation of Himself in Jesus. That revelation had been given to the Son; it had been appropriated by the disciples; they were living in it: the prayer is that, amidst all the temptations of the world, they may be kept in it. Then follows the purpose, that they may be one 'even as' are the Father and the Son. It is the Divine unity of love that is referred to, all wills bowing in the same direction, all affections burning with the same flame, all aims directed to the same end—one blessed harmony of love.

Ver. 12. It is out of the fulness of His heart that Jesus continues to speak. The sad change that is to take place in the condition of His disciples after He has 'gone away' presses on His mind; He recalls tenderly the care with which He had hitherto watched over them in an evil world; and now that He can no longer show that care, He commends them with longing earnestness to the Father. He does this all the more because it was in the Father's name given to Himself that He had kept them—in the revelation of the Father, in the unity of His own relation to the Father, in the consciousness that God was their Father as well as His; so that the Father as well as He shall keep them, and, in keeping them, shall only continue the work that He had Himself begun. The word 'I' is very emphatic—'I kept them: now do Thou.' The distinction between 'kept' and 'guarded' is not to be found in the thought of different spheres, such as inward and outward, but in the fact that the latter word points to the watchfulness by which the former is attained (comp. on 12: 47). At the same time the difference of tense in the original is worthy of notice, the first verb expressing *continued* care, the second the *completeness* of the security afforded. Yet one dark cloud rested on the bright past, and the eyes of the disciples might at that moment be directed to it. Judas had not been kept: how was that? To this Jesus gives an answer in these words. The wonderful fact itself, when rightly viewed, affords evidence that He has fulfilled His promise that He will keep His own. It was in carrying out the Father's will that not one of the Eleven had been lost: it was in carrying out the same will that Judas had met his fate. He was 'the son of perdition,' one who had freely chosen to move in that sphere of perishing, and therefore he perished. A scripture, too, or word of God (Ps. 41: 9, already quoted in chap.

13 might be fulfilled. But now I come to thee; and
these things I speak in the world, that they may have
14 my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them
thy word; and the world hated them, because they
are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

13: 18), had declared God's will, and that will could not fail to be accomplished. To suppose that Judas is now brought before us as one originally doomed to perdition, and that his character was but the evolving of his doom, would contradict not only the meaning of the Hebraic expression 'son of' (which always takes for granted moral choice), but the whole teaching of this Gospel. In no book of the New Testament is the idea of will, of choice on the part of man, brought forward so repeatedly and with so great an emphasis. The history of man is taken up at that point when God's previous dealings with him have prepared him for the exercise of a choice in which his responsibility shall appear. How far this previous discipline is the result of absolute decree is not said; but the very fact that it is *discipline* implies that the result might have been other than it is. They in whom the Father's object is attained are those 'given' to the Son, and Judas, therefore, was not one so 'given.'

Ver. 13. **But now I come to thee.** These words are to be connected with what follows rather than with what precedes. The thought of His immediate departure leads Jesus to pray that His disciples may be filled with a joy independent of His personal presence—'in themselves.'—The words 'these things I speak' refer to more than the fact that Jesus is at present praying—to more even than the actual petition at present on His lips. He has in view the *substance* of His prayer, continually taught by Him. His 'joy' was fulfilled in this, that the name of His Father had been given Him, that He realized the unity with His Father in which He stood. He had led the disciples to the consciousness that they too were in that name of the Father, and by that means the joy that was His had become theirs—it was 'fulfilled' in them. In answering this His prayer the Father will only be accomplishing His own plan, and securing His own glory through the glorification of the disciples in the Son. 'In the world' does not mean merely 'upon earth,' but in the midst of the efforts of the world to defeat the purpose of Jesus.

Ver. 14. The prayer for preservation is over: our Lord now speaks of the work of His disciples in the world. In ver. 8 He had said 'the words (*or* sayings) which Thou gavest me I have given them,' and the statement had been immediately followed by a declaration of their *personal* faith. Here He says: 'I have given them Thy word,' and the statement is followed by a declaration that the world hated them. We see at once the advance of thought. The disciples have received the Father's word for *utterance;* and, as a natural consequence, the

15 I [1]pray not that thou shouldest take them [2]from the
world, but that thou shouldest keep them [2]from [3]the
16 evil *one.* They are not of the world, even as I am
17 not of the world. [4]Sanctify them in the truth: thy

world, which might have known nothing of them had they only nourished their faith in secret, becomes their persecutor. How closely are they again identified by Jesus with Himself: they have not only His peace, His joy, but His work—the very peace, the very joy that filled His soul, the very work in which He died!

Ver. 15. **I ask not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them out of the evil one.** The disciples are in the world, and Jesus cannot yet pray that they may be taken out of it, for it is the very purpose of the Father that they shall be left in it to carry on His work. What He does pray for is, that, as their work and His will be identical, so also their preservation may be identical, with His own. The element distinguishing His preservation had been that mentioned in 14: 30—a total separation between the prince of this world and Him. The same complete separation He would now have for them, not merely that they may be delivered from attacks of the evil one, but also that they may be kept 'out of' him, may have no fellowship with him, no weakening of their testimony by yielding to him, but may be single, pure and faithful to the last as He had been been. The expression: 'to be kept out of the evil one' may surprise the reader until he remembers that in 1 John 5: 19, 20, the Apostle really speaks of the world as lying '*in* the evil one.' The teaching of this Gospel and of the whole New Testament is that there are two spheres in which man may live, that of the world and its prince, and that of 'Jesus Christ.' (Compare the many passages which speak of the Christian as '*in* Christ.') Our prayer ought to be, not that we may be kept 'from' the one, but that we may be kept 'out' of the one and 'in' the other.

Ver. 16. These words met us in ver. 14, but they are again introduced in a slightly different order, the emphasis being now thrown on 'of the world,' in order to prepare the way for the complete antithesis to be immediately expressed.

Ver. 17. **Consecrate them in the truth: thy word is truth.** The word here rendered 'Consecrate' is constantly used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to express the entire dedication both of persons and of things to God.. In this sense, but with the deeper meaning of inward and spiritual consecration, we find it here. It is thus, when applied to persons, not less but more than sanctification, the latter being implied before the former can take place. The word corresponds to the attribute prefixed to 'Father' in ver. 11 (for which, however, we have in English no other word than 'holy'): the

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[1] Gr. *make request.* [2] Gr. *out of.* [3] Or, *evil.* [4] Or, *consecrate.*

18 word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world,
19 even so send I them into the world. And for their
sakes I [1]sanctify myself, that they themselves also

[1] Or, *consecrate.*

same word, too, is used by Jesus of Himself in 10: 36. To be consecrated is, therefore, to be separated from the world, to be dedicated as a holy thing to God. This is to be done 'in the truth,'—in that sphere of the truth which is the sphere of the Father and of the Son; in living communion with, and appropriation of, the truth, so that the truth shall be that in which their whole being is moulded and consecrated. This meaning of 'the truth' is then more fully brought out by the statement, 'Thy word is truth.' Here by 'word' we are not to understand the word of God in general, but the word already spoken of in ver. 14,—that special word of the Father which is found in His revelation of Himself in the Son, the Word. And this word is 'truth' in its most absolute sense, truth which finds concrete expression in 'the truth.' It is the 'truth' that came by Jesus Christ,—not merely truth in opposition to error, but the eternal reality of things in contrast with that which is unsubstantial and shadowy, that which must pass away.

Ver. 18. **Even as thou didst send me into the world, I also sent them into the world.** Jesus has prayed for the consecration of His disciples in the truth, and He now speaks of the necessity that existed for it. They have been sent into the world (the sending is viewed as already accomplished) 'even as' He had been sent into the world. Not merely is the *fact of sending* similar, but they are sent by the Son with the same commission as that with which the Son Himself had been sent by the Father. They are to 'declare' the Father as He had done, and to make the same revelation of eternal truth, of eternal love, to a sinful world. How much, then, did they need a consecration like His! But not only so. There is a further ground upon which His prayer for their consecration rests.

Ver. 19. **And for them I consecrate myself, that they themselves also may be consecrated in truth.** It was for the very purpose of bringing them to a consecration like His own that His whole work of love and sacrifice had been freely undertaken. He might have said 'I was consecrated,' a thought which has its perfect parallel in 10: 36. But He speaks of consecrating Himself, partly because He entered into His consecration with perfect acquiescence and freedom; partly, mainly, because He is thinking of that High-priestly work of His which was now immediately impending. The following words express, with special reference to the disciples, the end which Jesus had been desirous to attain. It is that their consecration might be the exact counterpart of His ('they also'); that they might act in it a free and independent part, devoting themselves in personal faith to the task assigned them ('they themselves') and that all might be

20 may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only
do I [1] pray, but for them also that believe on me
21 through their word; that they may all be one; even
as thou, Father, *art* in me and I in thee, that they
also may be in us: that the world may believe that

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[1] Gr. *make request.*

done 'in truth,'—in conformity with the real, the essential, the everlasting (comp. on ver. 17). Finally, let us notice that the consecration spoken of is, alike in the case of Jesus and of His disciples, not a process but an act completed at once,—in His case, when, gathering together in one view all His labors and sufferings, He presented them a living sacrifice to His Father: in theirs, when they are in like manner enabled to present themselves as living sacrifices in His one perfect sacrifice. Thus the second section of the prayer closes, its main burden having been that the disciples, who are about to be sent forth into the world in order to carry on the work of Jesus there, and who for this purpose have had the name of the Father manifested to them that they may proclaim the Father, may be preserved by the Father from the world, and may be enabled to exhibit a perfect consecration to the Father's work. Thus shall the Father be glorified in them as He had been glorified in the Son, who accomplished the work that had been given Him to do.

Ver. 20. **But not concerning these only do I ask, but also concerning them who believe in me through their word** From the thought of the disciples whom He was sending forth to carry on His work Jesus now turns, in the third and last section of His prayer, to the thought of all who through their word shall be brought to faith, to the thought of believers in every countryand in every age. They are spoken of as those 'who believe,'—not indeed in actual fact, for none had as yet believed through the instrumentality of the disciples; but in the idea they rise before the mind of Jesus,—His Church down to the very end of time. The 'word' spoken of is that of ver. 14, the special word which is the revelation of the Father, and which brings man to recognise the love of the Father as it appears in the Son, and in the Son to them.

Ver. 21. The petition on behalf of all believers follows in these words, and their last clause expresses it in its highest form. The second 'that' is neither parallel to the first, nor is the sentence to be inverted, as if it ran, 'that they themselves also may be in us as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee.' It is dependent on the words coming immediately before, and thus brings forward the final purpose of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, and of that whole work of His by which our human nature was perfected into union with the Divine nature,—that believing men may be taken into the same glorious unity. The unity spoken of, then, is not merely that of Christians

22 thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast
given me I have given unto them; that they may be
23 one, even as we *are* one; I in them, and thou in me,
that they may be perfected into one; that the world

among themselves, whether outward or inward. It is unity in the Father and the Son, effected by that 'word' regarding the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son which has been appropriated in faith, and which produces a result corresponding to itself. It is what is known by divines as the 'mystical union;' yet in it believers maintain their own personality and freedom, for such is the force of 'they themselves.'—**That the world may believe that thou didst send me.** The first 'that' here is not to be connected with a verb so far removed as 'I ask' of ver. 20. It is a word of purpose, marking the ultimate result of the fulfilment of the prayer. And this result is that the 'world,' now the enemy of the truth, may be brought to faith. Although (ver. 9) Jesus had not prayed for the world, because He was praying for those who were to act upon it, He was not forgetful of its need. It was the world that He had come to save; and, although it rejected and crucified Him, He looked onward to a time when, as 'greater works' were done by His disciples than He Himself had done (14: 12), the world would own the Divine power appearing in them, and the Divine origin of His mission. It is the spiritual life of the Church, however, that (so far as has yet been spoken of) is to effect this end. Her unity is included, but it does not receive its special emphasis till we come to ver. 23. Her spirituality is mainly before us here, that life which her members live, not conformed to the world,—not coming down to the level of the world, with the vain idea that thus they shall bring the world nearer them, but ever rising as far as possible above the world, dwelling in the Father and in the Son, a city of God, from which even now there streams light that shall kindle light in hearts formed for light and life like its own.

Ver. 22. Jesus had prayed that all believers might be one as He and the Father were one. He now turns to what He Himself had done that He might effect this end. We have already seen that the 'glory' referred to is that of self-sacrificing love, brought out from amidst the taunts with which men met it when displayed in Jesus, and owned by the Father as the only true glory. Such a glory Jesus had given to His people that, in living fellowship with the Father and the Son, they may be one in Them. Not worldly honor or station, the favor of kings, the patronage of statesmen, or the wealth of nations, was their glory; but the gift to love, and to sacrifice themselves for the world's good. Then in that love would they be one, even as the Father and the Son are one.

Ver. 23. That is: not only that this oneness may be reached, but that, in its being so, the last step to be taken with believers may be accomplished, the final issue and perfecting of all that Jesus has to do

may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them,
24 even as thou lovedst me. Father, [1]that which thou
hast given me, I will* that, where I am, they also
may be with me; that they may behold my glory,
which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me

[1] Many ancient authorities read *those whom.*

* For "I will" read "I desire."—*Am. Com.*

for them. Whereupon follows again the effect to be produced upon the world, stated, however, in a fuller form than in ver. 21.—**That the world may learn to know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.** The substitution of 'learn to know' here for 'believe' in ver. 21 is remarkable. The two words cannot be understood to signify the same thing, nor can the latter, in conformity with the style of this Gospel, express less than the former. In one way or another there must be an advance of thought. We see this in the addition of the clause, 'lovedst them even as Thou lovedst Me.' A similar advance must be traced on the point immediately before us. Chap. 14: 31 appears to solve the difficulty. There the same word is used as in the present verse, and we are thus invited to extend our thoughts beyond the number of those who shall be led to faith. The whole world shall recognise what Jesus speaks of: even they who do not confess in faith shall confess in shame, that He whom they rejected was the loved of the Father, and that He has gathered His people into the same blessed unity of love. It is in this verse that the unity of the followers of Jesus is peculiarly dwelt upon. Their spirituality is accompanied by its highest result when it is perfected into unity; and with this result is connected the most powerful impression which they make upon the world. It is therefore a *visible* unity for which Jesus prays. His Church is visible; and that idea of an invisible Church, in which Christians seek an escape from the sentence of condemnation which their divisions compel them to pronounce upon themselves, finds as little countenance in these verses as in any other part of Scripture.

Ver. 24. **Father, what *thou hast given me, I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, because thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.** Having prayed for the spirituality and unity of all His disciples, Jesus now, in the closing petitions of His prayer, passes to the thought of their complete deliverance from the troubles of the world, and of their entrance with Him upon that glory with which He Himself was about to be glorified. It is difficult to translate the Greek verb [θέλω] rendered 'I will' in the Authorised Version. 'I will' is too strong; perhaps 'I desire' comes nearest to the original. The peculiar structure of

* Less harsh than 'that which' of the Revised Version. The true reading is ὅ (the disciples are viewed first as a unit) instead of οὕς in the A. V.—P. S.

25 before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee;

the verse, in which the clause 'what Thou hast given Me' is so remarkably thrown forward, arises from the fact that believers are viewed not so much distributively as in the unity immediately present to the Redeemer's mind. It is the perfect glory of Jesus not only as Son of God but also as Son of man that is spoken of,—His glory shining forth in undimmed brightness in the heavenly world. There is the true home of His being; and hence not 'I shall be,' but 'I am,' as in chap. 14: 3. Again, however, we must remember that this 'glory' is not that of outward estate. It is the spiritual glory of perfect union with the Father, seen and shared in apart from the shadows of earth. Hence the last words of the verse do not contain a statement of the ground upon which Jesus prays for His own, but of the nature of the glory which they are to behold when the ineffable, everlasting love of the Father to the Son is seen by them poured forth on Him who has taken the human nature into perfect union with the Divine. The full, the perfect love of God will then be seen to have embraced humanity in its tenderest outgoings, and the joy of the redeemed in the vision and fruition of that love will be complete (comp. on ver. 22).

Ver. 25. **Righteous Father, both** [*καί*] **the world learned not to know thee,—but I learned to know thee,—and** [*καί*] **these learned to know that thou didst send me.** Not in the last clause of ver. 24, but now we have the ground upon which Jesus prays that the 'glory' of which He has spoken may be conferred upon His people; and it connects itself not so much with the love as with the righteousness of God. It is just and right that those who have been prepared for the glory to be beheld should at last obtain it. Hence 'Righteous' (not as in ver. 11, 'Holy') 'Father.' For God as Father is not merely love, but love resting on perfect rectitude,—is One who will see that what befalls His creatures corresponds to what they are. The word 'both' here perplexes commentators, but it is to be explained by what seems to be the usage of this Gospel (comp. 15: 24), in which propositions subordinate to the principal statement are thus introduced; while, at the same time, like a dark background, they bring out the main thought with greater force. In the present instance this thought is contained in the last clause of the verse, and it is made more noteworthy by the fact stated in the first. The intermediate clause, again, 'but I learned to know Thee,' appears to be designed to lead us up to the main proposition following. It was because Jesus knew the Father that He had been able to communicate that knowledge to His people. Because they had received this knowledge, therefore, it was fitting that the love into which, along with the knowledge, they had entered, should bring to them its full reward, and should shine upon them as it shone upon the Son in whom they had renounced the world and the world's ways. It may, indeed, at

26 and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.

first sight startle us to find Jesus using such words of Himself as that He 'learned to know' the Father.' But (1) it has to be borne in mind that 'learned to know' is not in every respect a perfectly satisfactory translation of the original; it only approaches much more nearly to the truth than 'knew.' The proper meaning would be 'got knowledge,' or 'came to know.' (2) There is nothing more startling in the statement than in that of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. 5: 8), 'Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.' There, indeed, we have another and a separate word for 'learned;'but a process, a progress, is also implied in the word of the verse before us. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of an *experimental* learning of obedience by One who was possessed of a truly human, as well as of a Divine nature,—not the will to obey becoming more perfect, but actual obedience being practically more and more learned in the varying duties and trials of life. So here, He who was human as well as Divine, 'learned' *practically and experimentally*, 'to know' the Father; and it was because He so learned that He was able to communicate that knowledge—His own knowledge—to His people. Knowledge such as that spoken of can be acquired by *us* in no other way; and we have repeatedly seen, in considering this prayer, that what Jesus bestows upon His disciples is first His own.

Ver. 26. The thought of ver. 25 is now more fully expressed, and, with it, the result to which the knowledge spoken of conducts all believers is summed up in the one word inclusive of every blessing, both for time and for eternity,—love. How exhaustive is the mode in which Jesus teaches the 'name' of God, the revelation of the Father in the Son,—'I made it known to them; they know; I shall make it known to them!' It is the expression of complete revelation, similar —so far as in such a matter we may speak of similarity—to 'Which was, and is, and is to come.' Therefore there naturally follows to all who embrace this revelation a perfect entering into that of which it tells, into that love which unites the Father and the Son, and which shall be in them, as Jesus Himself shall be in them, the unbroken rest of 'peace' after the toils, the eternal sunshine of 'joy' after the sorrows of the world. Thus the third section of the prayer closes, its main burden having been that the whole Church of God, believers of every age and country, may be so brought to and kept in the unity of the Father and the Son that the glory of the Son in the Father may be theirs. For then, the conflicts of this world ended. they shall be partakers of the fulness of that love of the Father which shall encompass them as it encompassed the Son before the foundation of the world,—pure, undimmed, undisturbed by the presence of either sin

## Chapter 18: 1–11.

### *The Betrayal by Judas.*

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth

or sorrow,—the Father in the Son and the Son in them, all in perfect holiness and blessedness consummated in One. Thus, too, shall the end of all be attained, the glorifying of Him 'of whom and through whom and to whom are all things.'

### *The Betrayal by Judas*, vers. 1–11.

Contents.—With the beginning of this chapter we enter upon a new section of the Gospel, extending to the close of chap. 19. The section contains the final assault of the devil and the world upon Jesus. But the struggle is of a kind entirely different from that contained in the fourth or leading section of the Gospel, chaps. 5–12. There Jesus contended with His foes. Here He submits Himself into their hands, and they appear to be the conquerors. Yet they are not really so. God Himself takes up the cause of His Son, and so bears witness to Him, that all the suffering which He endures is but a 'lifting on high,' and that the death upon the cross is victory. The first paragraph of this section records the betrayal by Judas, and the seizure of Jesus by the officers of the chief priests and Pharisees accompanied by the Roman soldiers.

Ver. 1. **When Jesus had spoken these things, he went forth with his disciples over the winter-torrent Kidron.** The last discourse of Jesus to His disciples and His intercessory prayer to His Father have been spoken; and, from the upper room in which this took place, Jesus now 'went forth' to meet the fate that had been prepared for Him. More than this seems, however, to be expressed by the word 'went forth' [ἐξῆλθε]. It is the solemn word by which the Evangelist would express the free surrender of Himself by Jesus to His approaching fate (comp. its use in ver. 4). It is the continuation of His 'going forth' from the Father (chap. 8: 42). Descending the steep slope then which here leads from the temple-mount into the valley bounding Jerusalem on the east, Jesus first crossed the brook which flowed down the valley, although in a course at that date much nearer the temple walls than is indicated by its present channel. Some doubt exists as to the precise meaning of the name given to the brook. The Greek words may signify either 'The Kidron' or 'The Cedars,' there being evidence to show that a tree of dark foliage, probably a species of cedar, is known in the Talmud by the name *Cedruu*. The first signification seems, however, to be the more probable, and the apparently plural termination of the original may be easily explained: it is the Grecising of the Aramaic name ending in 'on,' as Ænon, Kishon, Arnon. The context compels us to ask whether the name is used only in its geographical force, or whether it is associated in the Evangelist's mind with any of those deeper ideas so often connected by him with names. The epithet affixed to it guides us to a solution

with his disciples over the [1]brook [2]Kidron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, himself and
2 his disciples. Now Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither

[1] Or, *ravine.* Gr. *winter-torrent.* [2] Or, *of the cedars.*

of this question. It is the cnly occasion on which in the New Testament the term 'winter torrent' is applied to the Kidron, a term derived from that word 'winter' which we have already found used in this Gospel with a reference deeper than to the season of the year (chap. 10: 22); while in the Old Testament it is the symbol of tribulation, trial, and judgment (Ps. 18: 4; 110: 7; 124: 4; Jer. 47: 2). The Hebrew name Kidron again is derived from a verb signifying to be black or dirty, hence to mourn or be distressed, mourners being wont to cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes (Ps. 35: 13, 14; 38: 6; 42: 9; 43: 2). Putting these considerations together, we cannot doubt that the Evangelist sees in the Kidron the stream of trouble, the 'winter-torrent' of sorrow and affliction. If we may suppose that the stream took its name from the dark color given to its waters by the blood of the sacrifices drained off into its course from the temple-mount, the meaning involved in the language before us will be still more striking. It was over this brook that David passed in the darkest hour of his history, that in which he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 15: 23). When, accordingly, we observe that the quotation in John 13: 18 is from a Psalm (Ps. 41), in which the events of that sad day are commemorated, and that the quotation is made in illustration of these last scenes of the life of Jesus, it seems clear that we are invited to behold in this crossing of the black mountain-torrent the crossing of the true David, 'the King of Israel' (12: 13), in the hour of a still deeper anguish than that in which His great prototype had been involved.—**Where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.** The garden is that of Gethsemane: not so much a garden in our sense of the word as an orchard, a garden with trees, and these, as appears from the derivation of its Hebrew name, olives. Peculiar attention is drawn to the leading person of the scene by the addition of the word 'Himself.'

Ver. 2. **And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times assembled thither with his disciples.** The 'oft-times' must refer to many previous visits to the garden, and not to those connected with the present brief sojourn in Jerusalem. The omission at this point of all mention of the 'Agony' in the garden has often occasioned great surprise, and been even used as an argument against the fidelity of the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. Yet it may be observed—(1) That, while the supplementary theory (see Introduction) cannot, as a whole, be received in explanation of the structure of our Gospel, it is quite natural that the Evan-

3 with his disciples. Judas then, having received the
[1]band *of soldiers* and officers from the chief priests
and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and
4 torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all

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[1] Or, *cohort.*

gelist felt himself justified in the omission of particular scenes, which were already known, through his predecessors, to the Church. (2) That his relation of the similar mental conflict and prayer in chap. 12—a relation in which he stands alone—made it both more possible and more natural for him to omit this section here. (3) That his object being now to bring prominently forward the calm majesty with which Jesus met His final sufferings, he was led to select those parts of His actions and words which peculiarly illustrate this, and to say nothing of other parts by which the picture might seem to be disturbed. Such a proceeding is consistent with the most perfect faithfulness. It was not the aim of any one of the Evangelists to present us with a complete narrative of all the life of Jesus, or of all the aspects of His character and work. Each drew rather out of His infinite fulness what was peculiarly appropriate to the design which he had himself in view, or to the range in which he felt himself called upon to work. What we have to ask is not that each shall tell us all, but that the several narratives shall not be inconsistent with each other. No such inconsistency can be urged here. The Agony is the illustration of the words: 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:' the narrative before us is the illustration of the words: 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;' and we know that both these sentences were uttered at the same moment by the lips of Jesus (Matt. 26: 39).

Ver. 3. The circumstances here mentioned are in contrast with those of ver. 1. The general situation is set before us from its two different sides: the first consisting of (1) Jesus, (2) His disciples; the second, of (1) Judas, (2) the band of soldiers, etc. The mention of 'the band' has been made an object of ridicule, as if it could only mean 'half a Roman army.' The ridicule is groundless, for—(1) Even if we allow that the band was of its full strength, it was after all only the same as the 'cohort,' the tenth part of a legion. [The strength of the cohorts varied from 1,000 to 300 men.] (2) The Romans in all probability did not think of one man only to be made prisoner, but of the danger of a popular tumult. (3) In Acts 23: 23 we have a remarkable instance of the number of soldiers used upon a similar occasion. The 'officers' were the servants of the chief priests and Pharisees. The trees of the garden made 'lanterns and torches' necessary. Although the moon was near the full, the Jews would imagine that Jesus would hide Himself in the covert and so escape.

Ver. 4. It is in the full knowledge of all that was about to happen

the things that were coming upon him, went forth,
5 and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered
him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I
am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, was
6 standing with them. When therefore he said unto
them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the

that Jesus speaks and acts. In this knowledge He 'went forth,' not merely out of the garden, or out of the shade of the trees into the moonlight, or out of the circle of the disciples, but (taking up again the 'went forth' of ver. 1) to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. At this instant the kiss of Judas mentioned by the first two Evangelists was given (Matt. 26: 49; Mark 14: 45).—**And saith unto them, Whom seek ye?** The object in all probability was partly to allow them to take Him, His hour being now come; partly to direct attention to Himself, so that the disciples might escape.

Ver. 5. **They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth.** The answer may perhaps reveal the light in which Judas had represented Jesus to the Roman authorities—'of Nazareth,' a Galilæan, prone to revolt; or it may be that the Evangelist beholds in it one of those unconscious prophecies of the enemies of Jesus, of which we have so many examples in this Gospel. In chap. 1: 45, 'Jesus of Nazareth' is one of the three great aspects in which we are led to expect that we shall behold the Redeemer.—**Jesus saith unto them, I am he.** Before the effect produced by the reply is related, a parenthetical clause is introduced.—**And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.** What is the object of this clause? Not to explain what afterwards happened, as if Judas had been the first to fall, and so to produce a confusion which made his companions also fall; not merely to awaken indirectly a deeper feeling of abhorrence for the traitor who thus dared to present himself before his victim, and that, too, as we learn from the other Evangelists, with a kiss. The explanation is to be found in 13: 27. We have before us Judas possessed by Satan. The powers of evil are concentrated in him; and to bring him thus prominently forward as sharing the fate of others illustrate in the most striking manner the victory of Jesus even in this hour of apparent defeat. Not man only, but Satan shall fall prostrate before the Divine Son; and, if the latter is taken by His enemies, it is not because of their power, but because He freely surrenders Himself into their hands (10: 18).

Ver. 6. It is the Divine majesty and innocence of Jesus that produced the effect. Like the buyers and sellers in the temple, the history of whose terror at the presence of the Redeemer is vouched for by the testimony of the earlier Gospels as much as by that of the fourth, they are overwhelmed with awe, and fall before Him (comp. on chap. 2: 16). As soon as they recover, Jesus repeats His question.

7 ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek
8 ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am *he:* if therefore ye seek
9 me, let these go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast
10 given me I lost not one. Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's [1]servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the [1]ser-

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[1] Gr. *bond-servant.*

Ver. 7. Their reply is in the same terms as before. The moment is come when Jesus is to deliver Himself up, and His sole concern now is for the safety of His disciples.

Ver. 8. And then the Evangelist tells us of the illustration which he beheld in this of the meaning of certain words of Jesus uttered not long before.

Ver. 9. The words thus referred to are those of 17: 12. There they primarily apply to spiritual and eternal safety; here to what is, in the first instance at least, temporal deliverance. It is impossible to imagine that the Evangelist did not understand this; but the powers of the world and of evil are so identified in his eyes that oppression by, or deliverance from, the one is oppression by, or deliverance from, the other. The temporal is the shadow of the eternal, and the principles working out upon man's stage here stretch into the long hereafter. In addition to this, however, it is to be noticed that the temporal deliverance thus afforded was really a means to secure the spiritual safety of the disciples. Seized by the Roman guard, they would in all probability have denied their Master even more faithlessly than Peter was so soon to do.

Ver. 10. It is possible that the position of 'therefore' [*οὖν*] in the original, between 'Simon' and 'Peter,' may be designed to call attention to the import of the apostle's name. It is not Simon only who does the act about to be mentioned, but Simon who is 'Peter,' the rock, the bold and determined one. The 'servant' is not one of the 'officers' formerly mentioned, but the high priest's own attendant, who may have borne his master's message to the 'officers.' His name was Malchus [King], and the mention of this fact, as well as of the minute circumstance that the ear cut off was the right ear, illustrates the personal knowledge possessed by John of what he describes.* The earlier Evangelists, who all mention the incident, do not give the servant's name (Matt. 26: 51; Mark 14: 47; Luke 22: 50). As the great object of John in this passage is to illustrate the perfect

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* [It also unconsciously foreshadows the future conflict of the Pope with the King or the civil power. How often has the papacy used carnal weapons for spiritual ends!]

11 vant's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said unto
Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup
which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

## CHAPTER 18: 12–27.

### *Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas.*

12 So the [1]band and the [2]chief captain and the officers
13 of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him, and led him
to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas,

[1] Or, *Cohort.* [2] Or, *military tribune.* Gr. *chiliarch.*

submission of Jesus to the will of His heavenly Father in the 'hour' now come, nothing is said of the healing of the ear. Luke alone tells us of it (chap. 22: 51).

### *Jesus Before Annas and Caiaphas*, vers. 12–27.

CONTENTS.—We have in this passage the appearance of Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas, together with the three denials of the Apostle Peter. The difficulties of the passage, both in itself and in its relation to the earlier Gospels, are unquestionably great. Our first aim must be to understand the narrative as it is here presented to us, without regard to any other narratives that we possess.

Ver. 11. The aid of all violence is disclaimed. Jesus speaks not of 'thy' sword but of 'the' sword, and thus shows that He can Himself resort to no means of outward self-defence. It is His Father's will that He should suffer and die, and to that will He unhesitatingly resigns Himself. The particular form in which the submission is expressed reminds us of the prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 39), and the same form of expression occurs at Matt. 20: 22. It appears to have been frequent on the lips of the Son of man. Jesus is now of His own accord at the disposal of his enemies. His words have put a stop to all further steps for His defence.

Ver. 12. The words addressed by Jesus to Peter lend boldness to His cowardly foes. They see that no further resistance is to be offered. A passive victim is before them; and they seize and bind Him.

Ver. 13. The word 'first' is worthy of notice. It may be used only with reference to the narrative that follows; but it is also possible that we have here another instance, similar to that which we have already met in chap. 3: 24, of the clear and decided manner in which the writer of the Fourth Gospel corrects impressions drawn from the incomplete statements of the earlier Gospels. In the latter we read only of a hearing before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, and no mention is made of Annas. That Jesus *was* taken before Annas 'first' is the

14 which was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expepedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the

statement of John, and the very distinctness with which it is made is no small evidence that we are dealing with real history.

Ver. 14. The introduction of these words obviously indicates that the reason why Jesus was taken to Annas first is not to be found in the mere *fact* of his relationship to Caiaphas, but that it is to be sought also in that *character* of the latter which, it was hoped, would influence the former. By the reference made to chap. 11: 50 we are reminded that, in his hostility to Jesus, Caiaphas had lost self-control, and had become a mere instrument in the hands of higher powers who was urging him onward to fill up the measure of his guilt. Either, therefore, the Jews thought that the hostility to Jesus raging in his breast must have already influenced his whole family circle (comp. chaps. 6: 71; 13: 26), or they hoped that Annas, if not as yet so deeply implicated in the plot as his son-in-law, might now be persuaded to throw himself heartily into their plans. It was at the same time of the utmost importance to secure the co-operation of Annas, whose influence, as we learn from Josephus, was very great in Jerusalem. Before this powerful man then Jesus stands, bound, submissive, knowing the fate that is before Him. Resting upon this as its background, we have now what the Evangelist, as we shall yet more clearly see, is greatly concerned to describe, the faithlessness of Peter.

Ver. 15. Although not certain, it is upon the whole most probable that the 'other disciple' thus unnamed is John himself. He and Peter may have fled at first with the others; but, if so, they had immediately returned. The name given to Simon is again important. We have already seen at ver. 9 the manner in which the Evangelist brings out the force of 'Peter.' Of that force we must not here lose sight. Simon is still 'the rock,' notwithstanding what he is about to do. It is the very fact indeed that he is 'Peter' which shows how terrible is the moment, and how deep the stab inflicted upon Jesus. But so far is John from wishing to depreciate his fellow-apostle that he regards him, even in the midst of his greatest defection, as the lion of the apostolic band, the man to whom Jesus had given the name Peter in order to indicate his boldness, the man with whom he had himself stood side by side, in years at the time he wrote long gone by, fronting undismayed the very judges who made him tremble now. At the door opening into the high priest's 'court' Peter is stopped. It is indeed only for a few moments, but they are full of weight for the

16 high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that 17 kept the door, and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I 18 am not. Now the [1]servants and the officers were standing *there*, having made [2]a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

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[1] Gr. *bondservants.*

[2] Gr. *a fire of charcoal.*

understanding of the narrative. During them Jesus passes through. The two apostles do not pass through at the same instant: John alone finds immediate admittance; and we are justified in saying that, before Peter has well begun his parley at the door, Jesus will be out of sight. Had it not been for an accidental circumstance the two apostles would not have been admitted at all. This circumstance is next related.—**And that disciple was known unto the high priest, and he went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest.** Reserving until we come to the close of ver. 27 any inquiry into the question whether the 'high priest' here spoken of was Annas or Caiaphas, we remark only that it is unnecessary to ask by what means John was known to him. There is no improbability in the circumstance, especially when we remember that the relatives of the Apostle were persons in easy circumstances (Mark 1: 20). Thus known, he finds no difficulty in obtaining entrance into the court.

Ver. 16. Peter is stopped at the door; and, while he stands there, Jesus is lost to his view. The circumstance thus related is in the highest degree natural, and it is related in the most simple manner.

Ver. 17. The maid knew that John was one of the disciples of Jesus, and the interest taken by him in Peter leads her to suppose that the latter must also be one of them. She asks the question, and the first denial takes place. As Peter enters the court, he says, 'I am not.'

Ver. 18. These 'servants' and 'officers,' it must be remembered, are those who had so recently laid hold of Jesus, and who were the instruments of His sufferings. They had made a fire of charcoal, a circumstance in itself exceedingly natural in the cold of that spring night: and at it they stood and warmed themselves. 'Peter' also 'with them' was standing and warming himself. Such seems at first to be the sole meaning of the words: but the clause 'for it was cold,' reminding us of chap. 10: 22 and chap. 13: 30, forces on us the impression that the Evangelist has something more in view than the

19 The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his dis-
20 ciples, and of his teaching. Jesus answered him, I
have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in
[1]synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews
21 come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why
askest thou me? ask them that have heard *me*, what
I spake unto them: behold, these know the things
22 which I said. And when he had said this, one of the

[1] Gr. *synagogue.*

simple fact apparent to the first glance at the words employed by him. The fact is more than historical. To the symbolic eye of John it has a deeper meaning. In this night of cold he sees Peter associating himself with the enemies of Jesus, perhaps consulting his own comfort while his Master suffers, at all events putting himself in a position where the faithlessness that had already led to his first denial must gain strength; and he thus prepares us to expect that the sin of which he has been already guilty may, probably will, be followed by a still greater fall. Whether this idea is brought out also by the 'fire of charcoal' is more difficult to say. It seems not unlikely that it is, for the word is not used by the other Evangelists; 'coals of charcoal' are in the Old Testament one of the symbols of Divine judgment (Ps. 18: 13; 128: 4; 140: 10); and this symbolic meaning may be extended to chap. 21: 9, the only other passage of the New Testament where we find the word. Apart from this, however, there is enough to show that ver. 18 is not simply historical. The peculiar spirit of the Evangelist appears in it, and we have the less occasion for surprise if we meet in the narrative other traces of the same spirit.

Ver. 19. The object of the narrative is to direct our attention mainly to Jesus. The Evangelist would place Him before us in the dignity and calmness with which He bore His sufferings, as well as in the consciousness of that perfect innocence through which He was able to confront, and really to defeat, His enemies in what seemed the very height of their power. To this, accordingly, he immediately proceeds.

Vers. 20, 21. The answer is dignified, self-possessed and calm. Jesus simply makes His appeal to the frank openness of His whole past teaching. He is willing to cast Himself even on the testimony of His enemies. They know what He has spoken, and He has no need to fear if they tell the truth. At the same time the words are intended to rebuke the hypocrisy of those who pretended a wish to know more about His teachings, when in truth they sought only a pretext for accusation. The mention of 'the world' and of 'all' the Jews lend great force to what is said.

Ver. 22. When we remember that the 'court' in which the exami-

officers standing by struck Jesus [1]with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus an-
23 swered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of
24 the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also

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[1] Or, *with a rod.*

nation was going on could not be large, it seems probable that this 'officer' said to have been 'standing by' was one of those referred to in ver. 18 as the officers who 'stood' by the fire. If so, the circumstance is important, as showing that Peter must have been in the immediate vicinity of Jesus at the moment when the blow was given. Under no circumstances indeed can he have been far off; and the fact is to be kept in view, for it constitutes one of the points of distinction between his first and his subsequent denials. The blow was a rude, perhaps a cruel one. It was also wholly unprovoked, for in the answer of Jesus there had been no want of courtesy. Yet it failed to disturb in the least degree the equanimity of the Sufferer, or to provoke Him out of His spirit of submission to His Heavenly Father's will.

Ver. 23. **Bear witness** here is certainly not equivalent to prove by bearing testimony in a regular manner, an injunction which would have been out of place. It is simply the solemn word demanded by the circumstances of the moment. Jesus is where He is by Divine appointment; and everything relating to His present state bears impress of the solemnity of His position.—It is precisely in John's manner that no answer to these words is recorded. The picture of submission is complete. Mere historical detail, such as might satisfy curiosity, is of subordinate interest to the Evangelist. The fact, however, that this is the case is worthy of notice. It helps to throw light upon that structure of the narrative as a whole which we have not yet examined.

Ver. 24. The difficulty connected with these words will be best explained when we have completed the consideration of the three following verses. In the original, Annas is so introduced to our notice as to lead us directly back to the 'Annas' of ver. 13.

Ver. 25. **And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.** As far as mere history is concerned, these words are unnecessary, comp. ver. 18; but they are designed to elucidate the idea of the scene about to be described. Peter is no longer only near the door: he is within the court. He is no longer only in the cold; he is warming himself at the charcoal fire. He is no longer only with John; he is along with the servants and officers of the Jews. Every-

*one* of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.
26 One of the [1] servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I
27 see thee in the garden with him? Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

[1] Gr. *bondservants.*

thing corresponds to that more determined, that double denial of our Lord now to be described.—**They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied and said, I am not.** We are not told who asked the question. In the narratives of the earlier Evangelists we find that, according to Matt. 26: 71, this denial was drawn forth by 'another maid;' according to Mark 14: 69 by 'the maid,' probably the maid of the porch; according to Luke 22: 58, by 'another man.' In John we have the solution of these apparent discrepancies. It was not one person only that thus spoke to Peter. The remark was made by many—in the excitement of the moment by many at the same time; and Peter (as is even implied in Mark 14: 70) repeated his answer to one after another. The 'they' thus suggests what was the true course of events. The second denial, as in Matt. 26: 72, was in boldness and recklessness an advance upon the first. At ver. 17 only the word 'saith' is used; now 'denied and said.'

Ver. 26. It is natural to ask why mention is made of the relationship between the servant who asks this question and the other servant who had suffered through Peter's hasty zeal. The probable answer is, that the circumstance aids in developing the idea which the Evangelist has in view. It heightens the effect. This man would ask his question with far more bitterness than the others (comp. the expression of Luke when he says in chap. 22: 59: 'he confidently affirmed'). He had been personally aggrieved by the injury inflicted on his kinsman. His question too is much more pointed—not whether Peter is one of the disciples, but whether his own eyes had not seen him but a little before upon a spot which he could name.

Ver. 27. **Again therefore Peter denied.** Nothing is said of the adjurations mentioned by the first two Evangelists.—**And immediately the cock crew.** All else recorded in the earlier Gospels is omitted.—We are now in a position to look back upon the whole narrative from ver. 12 to the present point, with the view of endeavoring to meet the difficulties presented when we compare it with the narratives of the first three Evangelists. As to those connected with the three denials of Peter, it seems unnecessary to add much to what has been already said on ver. 25. We may only notice that a use of the pronoun 'they' exactly similar to its use in that verse meets us in Matt. 26: 73 and Mark 14: 70, when compared with Luke 22: 59 and John 18: 26. In these passages the third denial is in question, and in the first two Evangelists it is drawn forth by 'them that stood by,' in the last two by a single person. The solution depends upon the same principle as that of which we have spoken with regard to the second denial in John. Not one only, but many of the eager and excited spectators would ask the question, and of that number Luke and John might easily single out the person peculiarly prominent. All three denials took place in the court of the high priest's house, and within the range of both the light and the heat of the fire that had been kindled there: the first, immediately after Peter had been brought into the court; the second, when he had retired into the opening of the porch, but was still within hearing of remarks made around the fire (Matt. 26: 71);* the third, when he was again more fully within the court.—From the denials of Peter we pass to the nature of the trial of Jesus here recorded and to the judge before whom it took place. Is the trial described by John the same as that of which an account is given us by Matthew (ch. 26: 57–68)? or is it a preliminary examination, having the nature of a precognition, and instituted for the purpose of laying a foundation for the more formal trial before the Sanhedrin? The impression produced by the narrative is that it was the latter; that it is a record of the proceedings taken before Annas 'first,' and that at it therefore Annas presided. Yet two difficulties stand in the way of this interpretation: the first, that Caiaphas, not Annas, appears to be the high priest so repeatedly mentioned in John 18: 15–22; the second, that in Matthew's Gospel the first denial of Peter is related *after* the *public* trial is finished, while here, on the supposition of which we speak, it will be distinctly stated to have taken place *before* that trial began. As to the first of these, it is at least possible that Annas may be 'the high priest' of vers. 15–22. Though he had been deposed by the Roman authorities, the office was, according to the provision of the Old Testament, for life; and a Jew like John might well speak of him as still the rightful possessor of the title (comp. Luke 3: 2). But if this solution is not very probable, there is another which fairly meets the case. Annas and Caiaphas may have occupied apartments in the same house surrounding the 'court' of our narrative. The structure of higher-class houses in Palestine, the relationship of the persons themselves and the customs of the East, lead not unnaturally to such a view; and it was very early entertained. But if so, though Jesus was really taken to Annas, Caiaphas would in all probability be present at the examination; and, thus present, his more youthful years and the passionateness of his rage against Jesus would lead him to act the prominent part which is assigned to him. The second difficulty is still more easily met. We have to bear in mind the peculiar structure of the first Gospel, and the tendency of its author to group his particulars according to their substance, rather than in strict chronological arrangement. Such may well be his object in chap. 26: 69–75, where the three denials are obviously brought into the closest proximity to each other. We seem even to be furnished with a hint to this effect by the words of ver. 69: 'Now Peter sat without in the porch.' It is not at all likely that, at the *close* of the trial, amidst the confusion and bustle of the moment, and when the enemies of Jesus were hurrying Him away, after having so far accomplished their object, a person of Peter's impetuous disposition would continue *sitting* in the porch. There is, indeed, another difficulty connected with ver. 24 of our passage, where, after Caiaphas has taken the part of which we have spoken, Annas is said to have 'sent' Jesus to him. This difficulty cannot be overcome by the rendering of the Authorized Version: '*had* sent;' and the particle connecting the verse with those preceding it is undoubtedly not 'now,' but 'therefore.' Yet we may well suppose that the reference is to the public trial, which was yet to take place before Caiaphas as high priest by law: in this capacity, and not in the more private one in which he had been acting at the investigation before Annas, he is now to have Jesus sent to him. If to these considerations we add the fact that we are ignorant of many of those details which would throw light upon the customs of the time, we shall, while not denying that some difficulty still remains, be able to rest with perfect confidence in the general faithfulness of the narrative.—One word more may be permitted in regard to the mode in which the three denials of Peter are presented to us by John. It will be observed that they are given in two groups, and that between the two there is advance; the effect is heightened as we proceed. Thus, in the first group there is only one denial; in the second there are two. The first takes place at a moment when Jesus has passed out of Peter's sight; the second and third, at a moment when Jesus is under Peter's eye—bound, yet patient and submissive. The first is made when Peter is as yet with John; the second and third, when he has associated himself with the enemies of Jesus. At the moment of the first Peter is in the 'cold;' at that of the second and third, he has seated himself at the fire of charcoal. The first is expressed by—'Peter saith;' the second and third are much more emphatic, 'he denied and said,' 'he denied again.' So many particulars warrant the inference that here, as in various other passages of his Gospel, John sees the historical facts with which he deals presenting themselves in two pictures, both unfolding the same truth, but in a climactic form.

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* The first impression produced by this verse is that the word 'there' in it relates to the interior of the porch. But it is absolutely impossible to think that many would be standing in such a place. They may have been around it, even within it, where it opened into the 'court;' in its deeper recesses they certainly would not be. In this point of view, great interest and importance attach to an alternative reading of Matt. 26: 71, which is very probably the true reading—not 'and saith unto them that were there, This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth,' but 'and saith unto them, There this fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.'

## CHAPTER 18: 28–40.

### *Jesus before Pilate.*

28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the

### *Jesus before Pilate,* vers. 28–40.

CONTENTS.—From the examination before Caiaphas we are taken to the trial before Pilate. The scene is in every respect one of the most remarkable in the Gospel, alike in its selection of incidents and vividness of description, and in that tragic undercurrent of thought by which it reveals the humiliation, the condemnation, and the shame of the guilty Jews, while they clamor for judgment upon One whom a heathen would have set free. Again and again, in rejecting their true King, they confess the degradation to which they have reduced themselves, until at last that degradation culminates in words implying the forfeiture of all that had distinguished Judaism, all that of which it had been most proud. The passage contains one of those double pictures which mark the style of John and the incidents of the two pictures are so arranged that the second exhibits an advance upon the first.

Ver. 28. The 'palace' here spoken of was in all probability a part of the castle of Antonia at the north-west corner of the temple-mount. Pilate had come for the time from Cæsarea to reside here, in order more effectually to repress the disturbances apt to arise at the season of the Passover. The hour, immediately after 'cock-crowing,' was certainly not later than 3 or 3.30 A. M. It need excite no surprise that the Jews should lead Jesus to Pilate at such an hour. During the whole night of the Passover the city would be in commotion; on this night in particular they were prepared for disturbance (comp. on chap. 18: 3); and the governor would certainly be ready to receive any delinquent. It is worthy of notice, however, that Pilate does not take his formal seat on the tribunal until 6 A. M. (chap. 19: 14), the hour before which, according to Roman law, no judge was entitled to pronounce judgment.—**And they themselves went not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.** In a commentary such as the present, the difficulty occasioned by these words must be very briefly stated. Looked at in their present context, the words 'that they might eat the Passover' can refer to nothing but the Paschal meal properly so called, and not to any of the other meals of the Paschal season. Thus, however, the expression seems to indicate; that the Paschal Supper had not been celebrated on the evening previous to the events now passing, but that it was to be celebrated on the evening of the day now begun. On the other hand, the earlier Evangelists distinctly state that it was from the Paschal Supper that Jesus and His disciples rose when they went into the garden, and when the betrayal took place. These Evangelists and John thus appear to be in direct contradiction to one another. We have to do with the question now only in so far as it concerns the verse before us. That verse cannot mean that the Jews

[1] palace: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be de-

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[1] Gr. *Prætorium.*

referred to in it were looking forward to the celebration of the Passover on the evening of the day about to begin, or just begun. The hour was probably 3 or 3.30 A. M. The Passover was a night-festival. It certainly would not begin till the evening was well advanced; that is, not less than eighteen hours had to pass from the point at which we are now standing till we reach it. These hours include a sunset, the time at which uncleanness of a much more serious kind than that produced by entering into the house of a Gentile was removed by the simple process of washing with water. The Jews could have no fear that by entering into Pilate's hall they would unfit themselves for eating a Paschal meal to be celebrated the following evening. But if it be so, what is the meaning of the words? The answer is,—they were afraid that they might lose their Passover. The meal was not yet ended in the city. Jerusalem was crowded at the time: a very large number of lambs had to be killed and roasted after 3 P. M.; and it must have been impossible to close the feast in every Jewish family by midnight. The celebration must have gone on the whole night through. Now the persons here referred to had been interrupted in their feast. They may have sat down to the supper; but, before they had finished, Judas had been with them, his offer made, his plans accepted. They had hastily seized the opportunity, and had rushed out to the garden, resolving to return and finish their meal before daybreak. They had failed in this: yet they will take one step more. They will try to obtain from the Roman governor the pronouncing of a final sentence upon their victim. If, however, this is to be done, it must be done quickly. We shall see immediately the marks of haste upon the narrative. From their haste came most naturally their scrupulousness at the thought of entering Pilate's house. To think that they would have been thus scrupulous had there been from eighteen to twenty-four hours to pass before they should be called to eat the Passover, is at variance with every feeling of human nature, as well as with the prescriptions of the ceremonial law. They were scrupulous because they desired to eat *without an hour's delay.* They had lost time already; the night was flying fast; the morning light would soon appear; it would be too late then: no interruption that can be escaped must be allowed: they would not go into the palace 'that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.' It is here that we see the marks of rapid action spoken of above: the effect of the true reading and the true rendering being to bring the two verbs 'be defiled' and 'eat' into close connection with each other. The Jews were afraid of defilement at that moment, because at that moment they were desirous to complete their feast. It may perhaps be said in reply that, if this was their intention, it failed. Morning broke before they left Pilate, and they lost the opportunity of eating. Precisely so. It is

29 filed, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore
went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring
30 ye against this man? They answered and said unto
him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not
31 have delivered him unto thee. Pilate therefore said
unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is
32 not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the

probable one of the very thoughts that John wishes us to carry away from his story as he tells it. Instead of welcoming the true Paschal Lamb, these Jews rejected Him. What thought more in the manner of our Evangelist than to let us see that, seeking to retain the shadow, and sacrificing the substance for its sake, they lost not only the substance but the shadow too (comp. 11: 48)?

Ver. 29. Pilate was Procurator of Judæa under the Roman government; and his character, as described by writers of the time, is that of a skeptical, cold, and cruel man, arbitrary in his acts, and cherishing no feelings but those of contempt for the religion of Israel. He was, however, a Roman judge, and until his passions were excited there is no cause to think that he would not show the usual Roman respect for the law. His first question, accordingly, was that of one who would try the prisoner before him with all fairness.

Ver. 30. There is pride in the reply, a lofty sense of their own importance and dignity,—that importance and dignity which they are so soon to sacrifice. The person whom we bring before thee is a malefactor; is it not enough that *we* say so, and that *we* deliver him up to thee?

Ver. 31. Pilate has already seen enough to satisfy him that no offence against civil order, calling for his interposition, has been committed. He will have nothing to do with merely religious squabbles, and he remits the whole matter to the Jews themselves. Thus the Jews are compelled to declare their purpose, and their *self-confessed* humiliation begins.—**The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.** Shortly before this time the Jews had lost the power of putting criminals to death. But the point now is, that they have to *confess* it. In their answer the Evangelist seems to see a mockery of their high pretensions. The bitter irony of circumstances forces from them an acknowledgment of their shame. But, while they are thus degraded, the Divine purpose proceeds calmly to its accomplishment.

Ver. 32. The 'word' referred to is 3: 14, or still more probably 12: 32. The appeal to Pilate paved the way for the 'lifting on high' there spoken of. The Jewish mode of putting to death was stoning. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, and could be inflicted by the Roman power alone. Hence, accordingly, the fulfilment of that 'word'

words of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake,
signifying by what manner of death he should die.
33 Pilate therefore entered into the [1] palace, and called
Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the
34 Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself,
35 or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the
chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou

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[1] Gr. *Prætorium.*

of Jesus by the very persons who seemed to have Him completely in their hands. So far from its being so, they were in His.

Ver. 33. The emphasis of the question is remarkable. The word 'thou' stands in the original at the head of the sentence, as if Pilate would say: 'Thou,—thou so humbled, despised, handed over to me as a malefactor,—art *thou* the King of the Jews?' Pilate may not embrace the idea, but he at least thinks the question worthy of being asked. We may notice already that grouping of his materials by which the Evangelist would impress on us the folly as well as the sin of the Jews. Boasting of their superiority to the heathen governor, looking upon him as a 'sinner' and reprobate, they yet at this moment fall behind him in spiritual vision. They treat the claim of royal dignity on the part of Jesus as blasphemy. Pilate asks, 'Can it be true?' The charge leading to the question, omitted by John as not necessary to his purpose, is given in Luke 23: 2.

Ver. 34. Many reasons have been suggested to account for this question of Jesus. The real reason seems to be, that the guilt of those now compassing His death may be fixed upon the proper parties. It is to appear that not Pilate before whose bar He stands, but others altogether are the guilty ones. The object is attained, for Pilate's answer shows that he knew of no harm in Jesus.

Ver. 35. Nothing could more strongly express the contempt of the Roman governor for the Jews than these first words in reply, 'Am I a Jew?' No words of Jesus had called for a repudiation of Jewish birth, but He had spoken in such a way as might imply that Pilate had been taking counsel with the Jews about His case. Take counsel with them! The very suggestion of such a thing fills the governor's mind with disgust, and he cries out, 'Am I a Jew? What have I to do with so contemptible a race? Thine own people have delivered thee to me. But for them and for their wretched squabbles I care not. I make my appeal to thyself. Tell me thyself, what hast thou done?' All tends to bring out the frightful degradation to which 'the Jews,' the very flower of Judaism, have reduced themselves. A Gentile treats them with open scorn, and prefers the words of one brought before him as a malefactor to theirs.

36 done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would my [1] servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.
37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, [2] Thou sayest that* I am a king. To

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[1] Or, *officers:* as in vers. 3, 12, 18, 22. [2] Or, *Thou sayest* it, *because I am a king.*

* For "Thou sayest that" etc., read, "Thou sayest *it*, for I am a king" and substitute the present text for the marg. [comp. Luke 22: 70.]—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 36. Pilate had hardly comprehended the charge that Jesus made Himself a King. That Jesus really was so is the great point now to be established,—the point to the confession of which Pilate shall ultimately be brought. Jesus, accordingly, without replying directly to the question, 'What hast thou done?' turns to this. It is not His chief aim to explain the distinction between a spiritual and a political kingdom, a distinction which the Roman governor would hardly have been able to appreciate. It is to satisfy Pilate that He may be and is a King, although in a sense different from that in which Pilate understood the word. For the same purpose He adds, 'Then would my servants strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews:' —where the word 'servants' (the same as 'officers' in ver. 18) does not point to spiritual disciples of the Lord, but to such as would be His attendants and soldiers if He were a monarch of this world. The mark of an earthly kingdom thus selected is precisely to the purpose of our Lord's argument as we have understood it. Pilate thought that He could not be a King, else His servants would strive to prevent His present humiliation and fate. That is no argument against My royal claims in their true sense, is the reply, for My kingdom is not one that has its origin in this world. In short, the whole argument is not one of self-defence alone: it is intended to lead Pilate to the acknowledgment that the prisoner before him is a King. Thus also the 'now' must be understood as the 'now' of the Divine counsels, not of merely present time. The period can never come when other words than those before us may be used of the kingdom of Christ. It is never 'of this world,' never 'from hence.'

Ver. 37. It is of importance to notice the difference of construction between the question as put here and at ver. 33. There 'Thou' stands in the first place, here the 'King.' The difference corresponds exactly to the course of thought which we have endeavored to trace. In the first passage 'thou' is emphatic; 'thou so poor, so humbled, *thou* a King?' In the second 'King' is emphatic; 'a King then, high as that is, art thou?' In the first the thing is regarded as impossible; in the second the possibility has dawned upon the mind.—**Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King.** It is hardly possible to understand these words as a directly affirmative reply to the question of Pilate, for Pilate had not acknowledged that Jesus was a

this end have I been born, and to this end am I come
into the world, that I should bear witness unto the
truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my
38 voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?
And when he said this, he went out again unto the
Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

King. It seems better to understand them in the sense, 'Thou usest the *word* king in regard to Me, but not in the right sense': and then the following words point out what it was that really conferred on Jesus the empire that He claimed.—**To this end have I been born**, etc. The transition here from the thought of kingship to that of 'witnessing' is very remarkable. It is to be explained by the consideration that, as 'the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,' and as the true glory of His work lay in submission to the demands of self-denying love, so His kingdom consists in witnessing to that eternal truth which is the foundation of all existence, which all were created to own, and in which alone is life. The word 'witness' must be taken in a very emphatic sense. Jesus is not only the perfect, He is also the free and willing Exponent or Revealer of all this truth to men. It is in His entire and voluntary surrender to it that His kingdom lies: His service is really His authority and power. In this respect, too, His dominion is universal over all who will own the truth: bowing to it they must bow to Him in whom it is contained and by whom it is 'declared.' Thus in His *witnessing* He is King. We cannot fail to notice how the absoluteness of this witnessing is brought out by means of the formula used by Jewish writers, 'I have been born and am come,' as well as by the twice repeated 'to this end.' For this Jesus had become incarnate: for this He was still standing there. Was not such a witness to 'the truth' in all its glorious range of meaning in reality the universal King?

Ver. 38. **Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?** Not surely the question of one seriously searching after truth, for in that case he would have waited for a reply; nor that of one in despair, which would presuppose a moral depth in Pilate's character inconsistent with the light in which he comes before us both here and elsewhere; nor of mere frivolity, as if he were treating the whole subject lightly, for in that case he would probably have made fewer efforts to release Jesus; but simply the question of one who, having no correct ideas as to truth, and no conviction even that there was such a thing, found in this frame of mind a hindrance to the faith to which he might otherwise have risen. 'Were there such a thing as truth,' he says, 'then I might believe Thee, but truth is nothing, and therefore Thy kingly position, if in this respect only Thou art a King, need not command my homage.'—**I find in him no crime.** It is a distinct sentence of acquittal; and the point of the whole, as it presented itself to the eye of the Evangelist, seems to be in this, that a Roman governor, a

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you
one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release
40 unto you the King of the Jews? They cried out

Gentile, declares the innocence and even feels to some extent the true majesty of Him who, though King of the Jews, is rejected and doomed to death by that blinded and guilty people. The guilt of theirs, however, has to be brought out more fully. Another opportunity of retracing their steps has to be offered them, and to be cast away.

Ver. 39. The origin of the custom thus alluded to is unknown, although it is generally supposed with no small measure of probability that, as connected with the Passover, it had been introduced as a symbolical expression of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Pilate's object in making the proposal and in styling Jesus the King of the Jews is neither 'unwise mocking bitterness,' nor 'abortive cunning.' He had been impressed by the majesty of Jesus, and was satisfied of His innocence. But he had no depth of feeling in the matter, and his sense of justice was hardly awakened by it. Any irony in his words therefore has reference to the Jews, and not to Jesus. Surely the poverty, the humiliation, the sufferings of the latter make Him a fit King for the former. As he really cares not what becomes of Him, but sees no reason to detain Him, he will make an effort to let Him go.—One subordinate circumstance connected with the words now before us must be noticed. They supply an argument for the fact that the Passover had begun, and that John cannot be understood in other passages to mean that it was still to be celebrated, on the evening of the day following the night in which we at present find ourselves. Even were it true, as urged by some, that the phrase 'at the Passover' might have been used of the 14th as well as the 15th Nisan, it is to be observed that, on the supposition of variance between John and his predecessors, the 14th, according to the ordinary method of reckoning, was not yet come, because daylight of the 14th had not yet broken. But if so, we must either accept the supposition that 'at' or rather 'in' the Passover could be applied to the night between the 13th and the 14th (for Pilate is speaking of the present moment), or we must reject the idea that this last is the night in which we are now standing. The former supposition, besides being in a high degree improbable, is destitute of all proof; and the only theory consistent with the facts is that which proceeds upon the perfect harmony of all the Evangelists, placing us, at the instant before us, in the night between the 14th and the 15th. It may be worth while to add that those who understand the words of chap. 19: 14, 'the preparation of the Passover,' as meaning the day previous to it, have no right to say that when the words 'at the Passover' occur here, we are substantially at the same point of time. Surely 3 A.M. cannot be said to be 'at the Passover,' and 6 A.M. to be 'the preparation of the Passover.'

Ver. 40. The word 'again' is here peculiarly worthy of notice.

therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

## CHAPTER 19: 1–16.

### *Jesus before Pilate. Second Part.*

1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.
2 And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment;

No previous cry of the Jews had been mentioned by the Evangelist; and, had his story been constructed merely to illustrate an idea, he certainly would not have spoken of a second cry when he had said nothing of a first. The word can only be a historical reminiscence in the writer's own mind. He knew that the Jews had cried out before, although he had not thought it necessary to mention it. Now, therefore, when a cry was to be spoken of, which he remembers was a second one, an indication that it was so comes naturally from his pen: 'They cried out therefore *again*.' The cry was, 'Not this man, but Barabbas;' and the guilty nature of the cry is immediately intensified by a brief, but emphatic statement, designed far more to bring out this guilt than to make us acquainted with a fact of history.—**Now Barabbas was a robber.** A robber! and yet they preferred him to the holy Jesus, to the Only-Begotten of the Father, to their King.

### *Jesus before Pilate*, vers. 1–16.

CONTENTS.—The dreadful tragedy is still continued; and that it is so in the same line of thought and with the same object as before, is evident from the parallelism between chap. 18: 33–40 and chap. 19: 1–16. The subject is the humiliation of Jesus, the half-hearted efforts of Pilate to release Him, and the determined hostility and cruelty of the Jews.

Ver. 1. **Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him.** It is the scourging itself that is the prominent thought, not the fact that it was inflicted by order of Pilate. The name of the governor indeed is mentioned; but this seems simply to be because without his authority the punishment could not have been inflicted. The punishment is itself the main point—the increasing sufferings of Jesus and His deepening humiliation and agony as, under the pressure of His sinful nation, He goes onward to the cross. In the first picture (18: 33–40) Jesus is simply the prisoner bound; in the second, that before us, He is the prisoner scourged and treated with contemptuous mocking of His royal claims. This mockery follows the scourging.

Vers. 2, 3. All is in mockery of His royal claims: first the crown of thorns, secondly the purple robe, thirdly the coming to Him with mock obeisance, fourthly the 'Hail, King of the Jews,' fifthly the

3 and they came unto him, and said, Hail! King of the
4 Jews! and they struck him [1] with their hands. And
Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I
bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find
5 no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing
the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And
6 *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold, the man! When
therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him,

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[1] Or, *with rods.*

blows with their hands. We include this last in the same series as the acts preceding it, for the Evangelist, by his peculiar language, appears to mean more than that Jesus was struck. The blows are the mock presents that the subjects bring. They approach Jesus with lowliness and with a 'Hail;' and then, as if laying their offerings at His feet, they strike Him. The picture of humiliation and suffering is drawn in striking colors, and its *advance* upon that of chap. 18 must be obvious to every reader. A similar advance appears in the next two verses.

Vers. 4, 5. The difference between the situation here and that at 18: 39 does not lie so much in the actual words in which Pilate proclaims the innocence of Jesus, as in the fact that on the former occasion he left Jesus in the palace, and came out alone to the Jews with his verdict of acquittal; while here he leads Jesus forth, exhibiting such a bearing toward Him that the Jews may themselves perceive that he considers Him to be innocent. It is further evident from the words of ver. 8, 'he was the more afraid,' that a mysterious awe had already taken possession of his soul, an awe increased no doubt by the message of his wife (Matt. 27: 19) which had just before reached him. In his words 'Behold the man!' we have a clear trace of the sympathy and pity existing in his breast. He speaks of the 'man,' not of the 'king.' It is the human sufferer to whom he draws attention, one whose sufferings and whole aspect would have melted any heart not dehumanized by personal envy or that fierce spirit of revenge which has marked ecclesiastical fanaticism in every age. So far, however, as he expected to touch the hearts of the Jews by the spectacle presented to them, he is doomed to be disappointed.

Ver. 6. **When therefore the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify! Crucify!** The *advance* from what is stated at 18: 40 to the present point is at once perceptible. Then the Jews refused to have Jesus released to them, and cried out for Barabbas. Now their cry reaches its culmination, 'Crucify! Crucify!'—**Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him; for I find no crime in him.** The words do not seem to contain any serious authorization on the part of Pilate to the Jews to crucify Jesus. The latter at least did not understand them in

they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pi-
late saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and cru-
7 cify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews
answered him, We have a law, and by that law he
ought to die, because he made himself the Son of
8 God. When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he
9 was the more afraid; and he entered into the [1] palace
again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But

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[1] Gr. *Prætorium.*

that sense, or they would probably have at once availed themselves of the permission given. The emphatic 'yourselves' guides us to the true interpretation. There is in the words partly scorn of the Jews, partly the resolution of Pilate to free himself from all responsibility in the guilty deed which he began to see could hardly be avoided. It is as if he would say, 'Is He to be crucified? then it shall be by yourselves, and not by me.' The Jews, accordingly, are sensible that they dare not avail themselves of the permission. They must adduce fresh reasons for the sentence of condemnation which they desire.

Ver. 7. The 'We' is emphatic. 'Thou, Pilate, mayest pronounce Him innocent; and He may be innocent of all such crimes as are wont to be tried at thy bar. But *We* have a law, and that law denounces death to persons like Him; for He made Himself Son of God.' The law referred to is Lev. 24: 16, and the crime is that Jesus represented Himself to be what He really was. Such was the guilt of the Jews. Not upon false pretences, but upon the greatest of all falsehoods, the misinterpretation of the truth,—in the thickest of all darkness, the light itself made darkness,—they hurried Jesus to His doom. The effect upon Pilate of this charge they had not anticipated.

Vers. 8, 9. The remarkable expression by which the Evangelist designates the language of the Jews deserves our notice,—'this word.' It is not a mere saying that the Jews have uttered. It is a 'word.' The Divine is in it. At the very time when they are pursuing the Lord of glory to His death, they are unconsciously impelled by a Divine power to ascribe to Him the glory that is His due. We are not indeed to suppose that Pilate felt this. But the strange awe—the sense of mystery—that had come over him before is deepened in His mind. He must renew his investigation with all seriousness; and for this purpose he goes again into the palace, taking Jesus with him, and asks Him, 'Whence art thou?' The question has certainly no reference to the place where Jesus had been born, or from which He had come to Jerusalem. It is a deeper origin that is asked after. Art thou from this world, or from another? a man, or from the gods?—**But Jesus gave him no answer.** The question had not been asked in the spirit to which an answer was never refused. Pilate had no sense either of sin or need. Even had he been answered and

10 Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith
unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou
not that I have [1]power to release thee, and have
11 [1]power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou
wouldest have no [1]power against me, except it were
given thee from above; therefore he that delivered
12 me unto thee hath greater sin. Upon this Pilate
sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying,

[1] Or, *authority*.

received the answer as true, he would only have bestowed freedom upon One who sought nothing for Himself: he would not have 'believed.' That this was the state of his mind is clearly indicated in the words next spoken by him.

Ver. 10. There is no trace of spiritual feeling in these words; nothing but the sense of offended dignity, that to one in his position, and possessed of his power, a poor prisoner should decline to reply. Hence the position of 'to me,' at the head of the sentence, and hence the twice repeated 'power,' to emphasize the authority which he possessed. The mention of 'release' comes first, as the consideration most likely to tell upon one in the danger in which Jesus stood. To this remark of Pilate an answer is given.

Ver. 11. These words call attention to the fact that the source whence Pilate derived his power,—'from above,'—was the same as that whence Jesus came. In using his power, therefore, against the Son of God, he was really fighting against God. 'For this cause,' also, he that delivered Jesus up to him (not Judas or Caiaphas only, but whosoever shared in the deed) had 'greater sin.' Why 'greater'? Partly, perhaps, because the delivering up was the first step in the process of invoking against God the power of God; mainly, because the sin thus committed was, on the part of those who were guilty of it, a sin against greater light than in Pilate's case. The Jews professed to know (and ought to have known) God better than the heathen judge. They ought to have known better than he the true nature of that source 'from above,' from which they derived their power. Therefore their sin, a sin against God, was in them 'greater' than in him. In this reply Jesus had done more than speak as an innocent man. He had assumed a position of superiority alike to His accusers and His judge. The effect produced upon Pilate was proportionately great.

Ver. 12. The verb 'sought' in the original implies that Pilate now made repeated attempts, not recorded, to effect with consent of the Jews the release of his prisoner. The attempts were vain.—**But the Jews cried out, saying,** etc. The term 'Cæsar's friend' had been, since the time of Augustus, conferred by the emperor upon legates and prefects as an honorable distinction. It is not improbable

If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king[1] speaketh against
13 Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgement-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew
14 Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto

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[1] Or, *Opposeth Cæsar.*

that the hope of obtaining it might even now be floating before Pilate's eyes. The argument, although not deliberately reserved for this moment, but dictated by the quick insight of excited passion, was thus fitted to tell most powerfully upon him. How it did tell the sequel shows. We shall err, however, if we imagine that the only object of John in mentioning the circumstance is to point out the consideration to which Pilate yielded. He has another object far more nearly at heart,—to exhibit the woeful, the *self-confessed*, degradation to which the proud Jewish people, by their opposition to Jesus, had reduced themselves. Something similar had been already noted by him at chap. 11: 48, but that fell far short of what is exhibited here. In order to effect their guilty end, they by whom the friendship of Cæsar was regarded as degradation and not honor, appeal to the desire for it as a noble ambition; they who would fain have trampled the authority of Cæsar under foot as the source of the oppression from which they suffered, and of the loss of all the ancient glories of their nation, represent the effort to maintain it as one that loyalty ought to make. With what clearness does the Evangelist see these wretched 'Jews,' in the very act of accomplishing their ends, plunging themselves into the greatest depths of ignominy and shame! The effect of the appeal is not lost upon Pilate.

Ver. 13. The decisive moment is now come; and, according to the frequent method of our Evangelist, the way is prepared for it by the mention of several particulars. First, we have the place. It was not in the palace, but at a spot called in the Aramaic tongue GABBATHA, and in the Greek the PAVEMENT. The Greek name was probably given because the floor was laid down in the mosaic work common in those days in places of importance, such as theatres and halls of justice, and before altars of the gods. It literally means *inlaid with stones.* The Aramaic word Gabbatha signifies a hill or elevated spot of ground, so that we are to think of a spot in the open air where a tribunal was erected on a rising ground, the top of which was laid with tesselated pavement. The time is not noted.

Ver. 14. **And it was Preparation-day of the passover; it was about the sixth hour.** It is not to be denied that the difficulties connected with each of these two clauses are very great. We shall endeavor to indicate as clearly as our space will permit the solution that we propose. 1. It is urged that the first clause means, 'It was the preparation of the Passover,' that is, the day before it. Difficulties are thus removed at the cost of making John contradict the earlier Evangelists as to the night when the Last Supper was instituted, and the day when Jesus was crucified. Apart from all consideration of the new difficulty thus created, we observe—(1) That the interpretation thus offered makes the Evangelist contradict himself (comp. what has been said on 18: 39; and bear in mind that Pilate at the moment there spoken of released Barabbas, Matt. 27: 26; Mark 15: 15; Luke 23: 25). The Passover was therefore then begun. To speak now of the day preceding it is impossible. (2) The translation 'the preparation' cannot be accepted. There is no article in the original. The Greek term must be rendered either 'a preparation,' or it must be taken in its well-known sense of 'Friday.' (3) It has never been shown that the day before the Passover was called 'The preparation of the Passover.' It has been *conjectured* that it was, because it is believed that the day before the Sabbath was called 'The preparation of the Sabbath.' *No such name as this last has been pointed out.* It did not—we may venture to say that, without a different mode of connecting the two words, it could not—exist. The whole foundation upon which rests the idea of a day called 'the preparation of the Passover' is removed. 2. A second solution is offered. By 'preparation' we are to understand Friday; by 'the Passover' the Paschal feast; by the whole expression, 'It was Friday of the Paschal feast.' There is much in this to be accepted, for it appears from Josephus that the seven days' festival was often designated 'the Passover,' and there can be no doubt as to the rendering 'Friday.' The difficulties, if nothing more can be said, are—(1) To see why the words 'of the Paschal feast' should be added; they are unnecessary; and they do not occur at ver 31, although the day there spoken of is the same as that before us here. (2) That it is not easy to exclude from the original the thought of the 'Paschal lamb.' That is the proper rendering of the Greek, and the rendering which lies closest to the whole conception and drift alike of the chapters with which we are now dealing and of the special verses in which mention of 'the Passover' is made. Nothwithstanding these difficulties, we accept this rendering as in part at least the meaning of the Evangelist. The difficulties will vanish when we consider that it is not *all* his meaning. For, in truth, he seems to be led to his choice of the particular form of expression which he employs by the tendency that we have so frequently had occasion to observe in him,—the tendency to see things in the *doubles* presented by symbols and their realities. Both the leading words of the clause before us are susceptible of this *double meaning;* and it is because they are so that we find them here. Thus —(1) The former word is to be taken in its *double* sense, 'a preparation' or 'Friday.' (2) The words rendered 'the Passover,' or as it might be simply 'the *Pasche*,' are to be taken in their *double* sense, 'the Paschal lamb' or 'the Paschal feast or week.' At the time when

John wrote, if not also much earlier, both senses were in use in the Christian Church. Exactly then as in chap. 3: 8 John has in view the double meaning of the Greek word for spirit or wind, so here he has in view the double meaning of these expressions. The day now dawning, and the events now occurring, were 'a preparation of the Paschal Lamb'—yet not of the lamb of the *Jewish* feast, but of *the true Paschal Lamb, Jesus Himself*,—of the Lamb now on His way to be sacrificed for the life of His people. It was also 'Friday of the *Pasche*.' Both these meanings are prominent to the eye of the Evangelist; and as, with the ready symbolism possessed by the symbolic mind, he sees that one of his deepest thoughts can be expressed by words which shall at the same time express an outward incident of the scene, he chooses his language for the sake of the richer meaning to which he is thus able to give utterance. The view now taken derives confirmation from the fact that at ver. 31 of this chapter, where the word 'a preparation' or 'Friday' is again used, the addition 'of the Passover' is dropped. Why is this? Because by the time we come to that verse the true Paschal Lamb has been slain: it is no longer possible, therefore, to speak of a preparation of Jesus. If, on the other hand, the word denotes the weekly day of preparation ('Friday') it is clear that in ver. 31 any explanatory addition would be superfluous. The particular view to be taken of chap. 19: 28–37 will also lend confirmation to what has been said. The second clause of the words with which we now deal is much more easily explained than the first: 'and it was about the sixth hour.' If this hour be according to Jewish modes of reckoning 12 (noon), we are in direct conflict with Mark 15: 25, 'and it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.' There, at 9 A. M., the crucifixion takes place. Here, at noon, the sentence is not yet pronounced. The main elements of the solution are to be found in what has been already said with regard to the mode of reckoning time employed in this Gospel. 'The sixth hour' is thus 6 A. M., an hour supplying us, as nearly as it is possible for us to imagine, with the space of time needed for the events already past that night, as well as with that needed for things still to be done before the crucifixion at 9 A. M. To these considerations has to be added the fact, that Pilate now for the first time took his formal place upon the judgment seat, and pronounced sentence with the suitable solemnities of law. But by Roman law this could not be done before 6 A. M.; and it is much more likely that Pilate would embrace the earliest opportunity of ridding himself of a disagreeable case than that he would carry on the process until noon. Both the place and the time for the last step in the trial of Jesus have now been mentioned. Pilate is on his judgment seat, on a spot elevated above the people. The true Lamb of God is before him ready for the sacrifice. The awful 'hour is come.' —**And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!** The words are not spoken sarcastically of Jesus, but contemptuously of the Jews. Pilate had no motive for being sarcastic with regard to the former. He had been impressed by the spectacle of meekness and in-

15 the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with *him,* away with *him,* crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but
16 Cæsar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

nocence which Jesus presented. He would have set Him free had he possessed sufficient earnestness and depth of moral character to carry into effect what he knew to be right. We cannot, therefore, suppose that he has any wish to treat Jesus with contempt. But all the more that this was the case, and that his own conscience was reproving him for his weakness, would his contempt be increased for those who were urging him to act unjustly. His secret displeasure with himself would seek satisfaction in his indignation and disgust with them. He had shown his contempt for the Jews from the first (comp. ver. 35), and now, with that contempt raised to its highest point, he says 'Behold, your King.' It is possible also that in these words the Evangelist sees one of those unconscious prophecies of Divine declarations concerning Jesus of which we have had repeated illustrations in this Gospel.

Ver. 15. **They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.** Instinct tells them that the last moment when they may accomplish their object is arrived; and, roused to the utmost pitch of fury by the words of Pilate, they cry out, with a quick repetition of words corresponding to their feelings: Let him be hurried off to crucifixion. But Pilate will still further provoke them, still further pour out his contempt upon them.—**Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?** Then follow those words evidently so full of meaning to the Evangelist.—**The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.** The chief priests, the heads of the Theocracy of Israel, give the answer, which thus comes upon us with a more terrible force than it could otherwise have done. Whan an answer is it! It is the utterance of self-condemnation, the renouncing of the chief honor of the chosen people, the casting away of what had most distinguished them in the past, of what they hoped most from in the future: 'We have no king but Cæsar.' God is rejected; Messianic hope is trampled under foot. In the momoment of securing the death of their true King, 'the Jews,' by the mouth of their leaders and representatives, plunge themselves into the lowest depths of guilt and shame.

Ver. 16 *a*. The tragedy has reached its climax; and in this single sentence the rest of the direful story may be told.

## CHAPTER 19: 16 *b*–22.

### *The Nailing of Jesus to the Cross.*

17 They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha:
18 where they crucified him, and with him two others,
19 on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE

*The Nailing of Jesus to the Cross*, vers. 16 *b*–22.

Ver. 16 *b*. **They therefore received Jesus.** 'They,' not the soldiers, but the chief priests of ver. 15 and the Jews of ver. 14. The verb is that of chap. 1: 11: 'His own accepted Him not.' Now they did 'receive' Him, but only to hurry Him to a cruel death. It will be observed how much this peculiar force of the verb is brought out by the true reading of the verse, which omits 'and led him away.'

Ver. 17. It is a trace of the accuracy of John both in observing and relating facts, that he is the only Evangelist who mentions the circumstance. Nor is there any contradiction betwixt this statement and that of the three earlier Gospels, which tells us that they compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross after Jesus. Jesus had borne it at first, but had afterwards been compelled through fatigue to resign it. On 'went forth,' comp. on chap. 18: 1. The place was called Golgotha, 'the place of a skull,' probably as being a small round hillock. The most interesting point to be noticed is the manner in which John dwells upon the meaning of the name. The 'place of a skull' is the emblem to him of the sad transaction about to be completed there.

Ver. 18. On the lingering torture of death by crucifixion it is unnecessary to dwell. We learn from the earlier Gospels that the two crucified along with Jesus were robbers (Matt. 27: 38; Mark 15: 27). To this death they too must have been doomed by the Roman power; and as we find the Roman governor writing the inscription and Roman soldiers taking part in the crucifixion and dividing the spoils (comp. ver. 23), it is reasonable to think that it was also a Roman, not a Jewish, arrangement by which the two robbers were suspended on either side of Jesus. If so, the object must have been still more to bring out that idea of His royalty with which Pilate to the last mocked the Jews. Not only, however, did he mock them thus. Following the custom of the time, by which an inscription describing the crime for which a malefactor suffered was nailed to the cross, he ordered this to be done now, and he himself dictated the words.

Ver. 19. The object, as before, was to do despite to the Jews, not to Jesus. To the last moment their terrible crime must, under the overruling providence of God, be brought home to them.

20 King of the Jews. This title therefore read many of the Jews:[1] for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew,
21 *and* in Latin, *and* in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.
22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

[1] Or, *for the place of the city where Jesus was crucified was nigh at hand.*

Ver. 20. The language in which this proximity of Golgotha to the city is spoken of is in a high degree remarkable: not 'the place was nigh to the city,' but 'the place of the city was nigh.' We are not to imagine that by these words the Evangelist means to say that the place of the crucifixion was within the city. He knew well, as every one knew, that it was 'without the gate.' It is the power of the idea, not perverting the fact, but leading to a special view of it, that meets us here, as so often elsewhere. The place outside the city, but really belonging to the city, is viewed only in this latter aspect, as '*the place of the city*,' because a closer connection is thus established between the crime committed there and the guilty city of Jerusalem.—**And it was written in Hebrew and Latin and Greek**, the three great languages of the then known world.

Ver. 21. The offence taken might have been, and probably was, expected by Pilate; but the mode in which it is described is again highly worthy of our notice. This is the only occasion on which we meet with the expression: 'the chief priests of the Jews;' and as it occurs in such close connection with the words: 'the King of the Jews,' we can hardly doubt that the latter words determined the form of the phrase before us. On the one side, we see the King of the Jews defeated, yet victorious; suspended on the cross, yet proclaimed to be what He is in all the great languages of the world; set before us as universal King. On the other side, we see the chief priests of the Jews victorious, yet defeated; their object apparently accomplished, yet its accomplishment turned to their own shame, and their Victim's glory.—Their request was denied in the most curt and contemptuous language.

Ver. 22. It is impossible to mistake the feeling of the Evangelist that in all this the finger of God is to be traced. Those who refuse to 'believe' shall yet be compelled to own that Jesus is King.

## CHAPTER 19: 23–30.

### *The Crucifixion.*

23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the [1]coat: now the [1]coat was without seam, woven from the top through-
24 out. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

[1] Or, *tunic.*

*The Crucifixion*, vers. 23–30.

CONTENTS.—This paragraph details some of the events of the crucifixion, but not in strict historical sequence to vers. 21 and 22. The conference with Pilate there alluded to, following as it did the reading of the inscription spoken of in ver. 20, must have been later than the moment when the division of the raiment of Jesus by the soldiers began. We can hardly doubt that this latter would begin as soon as the cross was erected and Jesus nailed to it.

Ver. 23. The soldiers are no longer a 'band.' They are only four in number, the usual number of a Roman guard (comp. Acts 12: 4). When they went out against Jesus to the garden of Gethsemane, it was in force, because they knew not how far He might really be the leader in a popular insurrection against the government. There was evidently no occasion for such a fear now, and their number therefore could with perfect safety be reduced. By the 'garments' here spoken of, we are to understand all the articles of clothing belonging to Jesus with the exception of His 'vesture' or tunic; viz., His sandals, girdle, outer robe, head-dress, etc. These they divided into four parts, giving to each of the four soldiers a part. Another course had to be taken with the tunic or under-garment. By it we are without doubt to understand the long garment reaching to the feet, woven so as to fit closely to the body (not pieced or sewed together), which was worn by the high priest—the garment of Rev. 1: 13. It is hardly possible not to feel that this vestment is to John the symbol of the fact that He who now hangs upon the cross as King is also Priest of His people. We are next told what was done with the vestment.

Ver. 24. Both in the dividing and in the casting of lots the Evangelist sees Scripture fulfilled.—**That the Scripture might be fulfilled.** The quotation is from Ps. 22: 18, and is accurately reproduced from the Septuagint.—**These things therefore the soldiers did.** The words may either be intended to emphasize the presence

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and
26 Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!
27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now

of God in the scene, as He made the Roman soldiers fulfil His Scripture; or may simply arise out of the intense interest with which John narrates each particular of these eventful hours.

Ver. 25. **But there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.** In Matt. 27: 55 we are told of 'many women beholding from afar.' But as there is nothing to say that the moment was the same as that now before us, the supposed contradiction between 'by the cross' and 'from afar' disappears. If the third of the women here mentioned be the same as the second, we shall have two sisters of the same name in one family; for 'sister' cannot mean cousin. The high improbability of this leads to the supposition that we have here *four* women, in two groups of two each. This view is confirmed by the fact that the lists of apostles are in like manner given us in groups of two, and by what does not seem to have been urged as an argument upon the point, that the four women seem designedly placed in contrast with the four soldiers. (Not that the Evangelist makes the number in order to suit his purpose; but that out of the 'many' spoken of by Matthew, he *selects* four to illustrate the historical idea which he is desirous to unfold.) On the supposition that four women are mentioned, it appears from the earlier Gospels that the second, here unnamed, was Salome, John's own mother [and that John and the elder James were cousins of Jesus]. Whether Clopas may be identified with Cleopas (Luke 24: 18), it is impossible to decide.

Vers. 26, 27. The act thus recorded has been variously interpreted; by some as in its main purpose an act of filial care for the mother whose soul was now about to be pierced by the sword spoken of in the prophetic word of Simeon (Luke 2: 35); by others, as a formal renunciation of her, that He may surrender Himself wholly to the will of His heavenly Father. It is in the first of these two lights that we must chiefly regard it. Then we can best explain the words of ver. 27, which are evidently the Evangelist's commentary upon what had just passed; and the renunciation spoken of had really taken place at chap. 2: 4.

Ver. 28. It is a question whether the words, **that the scripture**

finished, that the scripture might be accomplished,
29 saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of
vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar
30 upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. When

**might be accomplished**, are to be connected with what precedes or with what follows. In favor of the former connection, it may be said (1) It is John's practice to point out the fulfilment of Scripture after, not before, the event fulfilling it. (2) It is his usual practice to notice the fulfilment of Scripture in what is done *to* Jesus, rather than in what is done *by* Him to fulfil it. (3) The use of the word 'now' seems to show that we have already reached a complete accomplishment of Scripture. It would thus appear that it is the intention of the Evangelist to present to us a word spoken by Jesus at a moment when He knew that Scripture had been already fulfilled. He is in the position of One whose work is done, and for whom nothing remains but to depart. The strong counter-argument is that everywhere else in this Gospel (see chap. 2: 22) 'the scripture' denotes some *special passage*. As, however, we cannot doubt that John regarded the utterance here recorded as fulfilling Ps. 69: 21 (see 2: 17), the difference between the two interpretations is less than it at first appears.—That thirst was a great part of the agony of the cross, we know; nor in all probability should we think of more, were it not the manner of John to relate minor incidents, not for themselves alone, but for the sake of the deeper meaning which he always sees to be involved in them. This *manner* of the Evangelist, therefore, compels us to ask whether there may not be a deeper meaning in this cry? Let us turn to chap. 4: 7. There, immediately after mention of 'the sixth hour,' Jesus says to the woman of Samaria: 'Give me to drink.' Here, in close contiguity with another 'sixth hour' (ver. 14), He says: 'I thirst.' But we have already seen in the language of chap. 4: 7 the longing of the Redeemer for the fruits of that work which He was then accomplishing in toil and weariness; and we are thus led to think of something of the same kind here. It was not merely to temper suffering that Jesus cried, but it was for refreshment to the body symbolizing a deeper refreshment to the soul.—The request thus made was answered.

Ver. 29. It is possible that the 'vinegar' here referred to may have been the mixture of vinegar and water used by the Roman soldiers to quench their thirst; or it may even have been a vessel of vinegar itself, of which large quantities were used at the Passover. The 'hyssop' cannot be equivalent to the 'reed' of Matt. 27: 48 and Mark 15: 36, for the hyssop plant was of too low and bushy a habit to supply a reed. It is simply a small bunch of hyssop, which was most probably attached to the end of a reed. A piece of sponge soaked in vinegar was fastened to the hyssop end of the rod, and the draught was in this way conveyed to the lips of Jesus.

Ver. 30. It is not said that Jesus took much of the vinegar, and

Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

## CHAPTER 19: 31-37.

### *The Body of Jesus on the Cross.*

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high

the probability is that He did not. When He had taken it He exclaimed, **It is finished.**—The word is the same as in ver. 28, but now He utters what there He 'knew.' It is the shout of victory, not the cry of satisfaction that suffering is at an end. Having said this, **He bowed His head** (which had been previously erect), and **delivered up His spirit.**—The verb used for 'delivered up' is peculiarly important. The choice of the word leaves no doubt as to the meaning of the Evangelist. However true it is that by the cruelty of man the death upon the cross was brought about as by its natural cause, there was something deeper and more solemn in it of which we must take account. It was His own free will to die. There is in Him an ever-present life and power and choice in which He, even at the very last moment, offers Himself as a sacrifice (Heb. 9: 14). He tells us Himself of His life, 'No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again' (10: 18): and these words have now their illustration. Compare the language of His dying cry, recorded by Luke (23: 46): 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' We forbear to enter further upon the physical cause of the death thus recorded. It is impossible not to feel that the speculations which have been indulged in on this subject have done more to shock Christian feeling than to satisfy a legitimate spirit of inquiry.

### *The Body of Jesus on the Cross*, vers. 31–37.

CONTENTS.—Jesus is now dead, and this paragraph relates the events immediately following, before His body was removed from the cross.

Ver. 31. **The Jews therefore, because it was Preparation-day.**—It has already been remarked (on ver. 14) that the word here used has in itself the double meaning of 'preparation' and of 'Friday.' Here, without the article, it cannot have the general sense of 'the preparation.' Any thought of preparation, too, lying in the word must, as appears clearly from the following clause, be connected with the Sabbath and not with the Passover. Had the latter been thought of, it would surely have been expressly mentioned, to obviate the mistake to which the use of a well-understood technical term

*day*), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken,
32 and *that* they might be taken away. The soldiers
therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of
33 the other which was crucified with him: but when
they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already,
34 they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers
with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there

could not fail to give rise. These words, therefore, so far from supporting the view of those who think that the legal Passover had not yet been celebrated, tend rather in the opposite direction. Nor is there any weight in the argument that, had the term been used as we have supposed, the Evangelist would have explained it for the benefit of his Greek readers. It was the *Christian* name for Friday, and to Greek Christians it could suggest nothing else. It is generally allowed that the 'Sabbath' here referred to is termed 'high,' because it was one of more than ordinary solemnity, deriving its importance on this occasion from the fact that it coincided with either the first or the second day (both being important) of the Paschal festival. The operation of breaking the legs, though not sufficient to cause death, would naturally hasten it. Under any circumstances it prevented the escape of the prisoner.

Ver. 32. The bodies had been suspended on the cross with Jesus in the midst. It is natural to suppose that the soldiers, approaching from two opposite sides, would proceed in the order thus mentioned: each would strike his blow on one malefactor's body; then they would come to Jesus.

Vers. 33, 34. The explanation of the fact here recorded has always been felt to be attended with peculiar difficulty. The idea that Jesus was not dead, but that death was produced by the spear-wound, must at once be set aside. It is inconsistent with the distinct language of the Evangelist that Jesus was 'dead already,' that He had 'delivered up' His spirit into the hands of His Father. But the impossibility that blood and water should issue from the side of a person already dead is urged on physiological grounds. It might be possible that we have here a unique appearance based upon a unique situation. If it be a general truth that the moment death comes corruption begins, and if, notwithstanding, Jesus 'saw no corruption,' we are prepared to expect that the phenomena accompanying His death will transcend our experience; and it may well be that we have such phenomena before us here. Before we resort, however, to such an explanation, we ought to ask whether, when we take all the circumstances into account, it is really necessary. We remark therefore that—(1) There is nothing to prevent our assuming that the spear-wound was inflicted the *instant after death*. The Evangelist does not convey the slightest hint to us that any interval elapsed between the two events, and the

35 came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.

nature of death by crucifixion is such as to call us to think of the latest possible possible moment as that of death. 'Pilate marvelled if He were already dead' (Mark 15: 44). (2) In conformity with the opinion of all expositors, the region of the heart must be looked upon as that penetrated by the spear. (3) The 'blood and water' derive *all* their importance from that symbolical meaning which they have in the eyes of John. The circumstance which more than any other has led inquirers astray in judging of what we have here before us is, that they have supposed it to be the aim of the Evangelist to establish the fact that Jesus was really put to death. But, as we shall see on ver. 35, this is certainly not the point before him. The fact now spoken of has no connection whatever with *proof* that death had taken place; and it is mentioned solely for the sake of the deeper meaning which it involves. (4) These things being so, it is obviously a matter of no moment what the *quantity* of 'blood and water' that issued from the wound may have been. The smallest quantity will suffice; and will suggest the truth intended as well as the largest. But it has never been proved that such a *small* quantity might not issue from a wound thus inflicted. The wound would be a large one; the iron point of the spear, we may be sure, was both heavy and rough; and if the instant after death the pericardium and heart were pierced, there is no difficulty in supposing such an effusion of blood and of water, or *serum*, as could not fail to attract the attention of the beholder, and suggest to his mind lessons of deep spiritual significance. If this be so, the literal interpretation of the passage may be retained. What the water and blood symbolized to John must be learned from the general tenor of his writings. The 'blood' brings to mind the sacrifice for the world's sin (1: 29), the life laid down for the life of the world (6: 51; 10: 15), the cleansing of and by atonement (1 John 1: 7; Rev. 1: 5; 5: 9). The 'water' recalls the teaching of 3: 5; 7: 38; 13: 8, 10; and symbolizes the abiding gift of the Spirit of holiness. Thus in His death Jesus is presented as the Source of Life, in all its purity and spiritual power. That this section of the Gospel stands in closest connection with 1 John 5: 6 seems to us beyond doubt: what is the exact nature of the relation between the passage is a question which belongs to the exposition of the Epistle.

Ver. 35. It is of himself that the Evangelist speaks; compare 1 John 1: 1, 2, 3. The witness that he bears is 'true.' The word differs from that which is used in the second member of this verse and in 21: 24 ('We know that his witness is true'). It designates the testimony as *genuine* and *real*. Not only is it *truthful*, but it is all that testimony can be: the witness will not deceive; but—more than this—in regard to the matter which he here attests, he cannot have been deceived or mistaken. See the notes on 4: 37; 8: 16. The object of

36 For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be [1] broken.
37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

[1] Or, *crushed.*

this solemn testimony is that they may 'believe;' not simply may believe the facts, but may rest in a true and settled faith upon Him of whom these wonders can be related. The significance belonging to the facts thus solemnly commemorated is now further illustrated (vers. 36, 37): they are the fulfilment of the Divine counsels expressed in Scripture.

Vers. 36, 37. The passages referred to in the first of these quotations seem to be Ex. 12: 46 and Num. 9: 12, rather than Ps. 34: 20. It is probable, however, that the last of these is founded upon the first two. Great importance was attached by the Jews to the precept that no bone of the Paschal Lamb should be broken. God's counsel, typified in this, is now fulfilled in the true Paschal Lamb (see chap. 1: 29). In the second passage referred to (Zech. 12: 10), the Evangelist sets aside what is universally allowed to be the false translation of the Septuagint, and translates from the Hebrew. It is not impossible that in this passage also there may be a distant allusion to the rites of the Passover; for the bitterness of the 'mourning' alluded to seems to be founded on the mourning of Egypt for its first-born. But, whether this be so or not, the allusion in the Prophet to Him who is to come as the manifestation of God to His people is distinct. The true reading of the passage in Zechariah is: 'They shall look on Me whom they pierced,' where the word 'Me' is to be explained by the fact that the Sender is identified with the Sent, the Lord with His prophet. It is worthy of notice that the words translated 'pierced' in vers. 34 and 37 are different, from which we may conclude that the Evangelist does not rest in the mere detail of the piercing, but dwells upon the wider thought, that Israel rejected and crucified its Lord. Such, however, had been God's counsel; and thus spoken, not only by the law, but by the *Prophets* (comp. 1: 45), this counsel is now fulfilled in Jesus.—One remark more may be permitted on the peculiar light in which the whole of this remarkable scene seems to present itself to the eye of the Evangelist. Jesus is obviously here, as indeed He has been throughout the Gospel, the true Paschal Lamb (1: 29 and chap. 6). Yet He is that Lamb looked at not simply in the moment of dying, but as, in dying (in that dying which has been going on throughout His whole suffering life, and only culminates now), the true substance of His people's Paschal feast, their nourishment, their life. The conduct of the Jews to Jesus as He hangs upon the cross thus assumes the form of an inverted, a contorted, Passover. They had that morning lost their legal Passover—had lost even the shadow, because they rejected and despised the substance. 'Yet,'

## Chapter 19: 38–42.

### *The Burial of Jesus.*

38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came there-
39 fore, and took away his body. And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a [1]mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hun-

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[1] Some ancient authorities read *roll.*

says the Evangelist, 'they found a Passover. Let us follow them to the cross. There let us see the righteous dealings, the deserved irony, of the Almighty, as He makes their cruel mockings of the true Paschal Lamb shape them into a Passover of judgment, of added sin and deepened shame.' If the passage be looked at in this light—the only light, as it seems to us, which at once explains the general structure of the section and the peculiar expressions employed—it will be found to be full of the most important consequences alike for the biblical critic and for the dogmatic theologian.

### *The Burial of Jesus*, vers. 38–42.

Contents—The paragraph before us records the committal of the body of Jesus to the tomb.

Ver. 38. It is easy to understand that Pilate should at once grant the permission asked. He had no interest in keeping the body; and by giving it up to disciples of Jesus, he would have a fresh opportunity of at once doing despite to, and exasperating, the Jews. It seems not unlikely that in the fact that disciples receive the body of the Lord, the Evangelist beholds a token of the care with which it was watched over by His Father in Heaven. Joseph, however, was not alone.

Ver. 39. The quantity of spices thus brought by Nicodemus is certainly remarkable; and hence some have shrunk from taking the words in their literal sense, holding that 'a hundred pound' (especially as here qualified by 'about') may be an expression merely denoting a great quantity. Others, following the suggestion of 2 Chron. 16: 14, have supposed that, when part of the mixture of spices had been spread on the linen cloths in which the body was to be wrapped, the remainder was destined for 'a burning.' Whether this be accepted or not, the passage referred to is interesting as bringing before us the burial of *a King*. The distinct identification of this Nicodemus with the ruler who came to Jesus by night (chap. 3) is significant. The

40 dred pound *weight.* So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the
41 custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid.

humiliation of the King of Israel (3: 3; 12: 13), so far from discouraging, does but strengthen the once weak faith of the true disciple; and in contrast with (and—may we not add—in expression of shame and penitence for) timorous hesitation, we read of the lavish offering of a love open and avowed. The declaration of chap. 12: 32 begins to receive its fulfilment.

Ver. 40 It is hardly possible to suppose that the fact mentioned in the last clause is without a purpose. The words 'even as' would of themselves seem to indicate as much as this. Let us remember then the importance which was attached by all to a splendid burial (comp. Luke 16 : 22); let us bear in mind that by 'the Jews' we are here to understand not the nation, but rather that portion of the nation which best exemplified its narrowness and bigotry, and which included its more respectable class; lastly, let us think of the worldly circumstances of Joseph, and in all probability of Nicodemus; and we shall feel that the Evangelist desires to call our attention to the striking fact, that notwithstanding the ignominious death to which Jesus had been put, and through the rage of His enemies appeared to have so completely triumphed, there were yet those who prepared for Him as honored and as costly a burial as could await any 'Jew.' That the word 'burial' is used to describe the wrapping of the body in the linen cloths may arise from the Evangelist's desire to mention a circumstance which brings strongly into relief the condition in which these cloths were afterwards found (20: 7). The body having thus been prepared for burial, the actual entombment alone remains to be spoken of.

Ver. 41. Nothing further is told by John of the 'garden' and of the 'sepulchre' thus referred to. We learn only from the other Evangelists that they belonged to Joseph, and that the sepulchre, as is common round Jerusalem, was hewn in the rock. It is not easy to say whether the Evangelist, in referring to the particulars he mentions, may have desired to prepare the way for the reality of the resurrection. They certainly tend to do so, because they help to show that, when the grave was found empty, none but Jesus could have risen from it. It seems more probable, however, that they are mentioned with the view of bringing out the honor paid to Jesus in His death. He was laid, not in the place of common burial, but in a garden, and in a new sepulchre, where no one had been laid before Him. Finally, we are informed why they laid Jesus there in the condition in which He was.

42 There then because of the Jews' Preparation, (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.

## CHAPTER 20: 1–10.

### *The Empty Grave.*

1 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary

Ver. 42. These words can hardly mean that Jesus was laid in this tomb simply as a matter of convenience, owing to the nearness of the Sabbath. The meaning must rather be that, owing to this nearness, the embalming had been more readily left in that unfinished state of which we read in the other Evangelists. The proximity of the tomb to the city has little bearing on the former, it has a distinct bearing on the latter point. It is unnecessary to say more on the question of 'the Preparation-day of the Jews.' There is only one simple and natural meaning of the words. It was now Friday afternoon; the Sabbath was at hand; the hours of that part of the Friday devoted to preparation for the Sabbath had set in. It was desirable, therefore, that the work of embalming the body should for the present be brought to a close. The reader cannot fail to be struck with the touching pathos lent to the whole sentence by making it close with the words 'laid they Jesus.'

### *The Empty Grave*, vers. 1–10.

CONTENTS.—The victory of Jesus over His enemies, in the midst of apparent defeat, is still the subject before us. The preceding chapter had closed with the statement that He was laid in the tomb: when the narrative of chap. 20 begins, the tomb is empty. The great event of the Resurrection had already taken place. The victory of Jesus over the world and death had been consummated, for at the very instant when their attack was fiercest He had escaped their hands. The question may indeed be asked, whether chap. 20, as containing an account of the risen Saviour, ought not to constitute a separate section of the Gospel. But the reply is easy. The death and resurrection of Jesus always accompany one another. They are complementary parts of one whole, each impossible without the other. It must be distinctly kept in view that the leading thought of the Fourth Gospel is not that of defeat *in* suffering followed by victory, but of triumph *through* and *over* suffering. The first paragraph of chap. 20, extending to the close of ver. 10, may best be described as Preparation for the risen Saviour.

Ver. 1. Few parts of the Fourth Gospel illustrate better than these words the principle of selection upon which it is composed. They mention Mary Magdalene alone; and yet we learn from her own words in ver. 2, '*we* know,' that she could not have been alone,—that she formed (as indeed we are expressly told by the other Evangelists) one of a group of women who came on the morning of the first day of the week to finish the embalming of the body

Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.
2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid

of Jesus. Again, we here read of 'the stone taken away from the sepulchre,' though no mention had been made of this stone in the previous narrative. It is obvious that here, as elsewhere, we have to deal not so much with events of full historical detail as with events *selected* on account of their bearing upon the idea which the Evangelist wishes to illustrate. In the present instance that idea is not the mere fact of the Resurrection of Jesus, but the nature of His post-resurrection state. With this His appearance to Mary Magdalene is closely associated; and hence the Evangelist, omitting all mention of the other women, concerns himself with her alone. Of Mary, then, we are told that she came to the sepulchre on the first day of the week 'early,' and 'when it was yet dark.' Similar expressions are found in the other Gospels: thus Luke speaks of 'early' (literally 'deep') 'dawn,' and Mark (ver. 2) records that women came to the sepulchre 'very early.' The only difficulty that presents itself here is occasioned by words which follow in the same verse of Mark's Gospel, which state that the sun had risen. The discussion of this difficulty does not belong to this place, and we must content ourselves with mentioning three solutions which have been proposed. (1) That the words of Mark 16: 2 are intended only as a general indication of time, *at* or *about sunrise*, the rays of dawn being in the sky, but the measure of light still small. (2) That, though the sun had risen, yet haze or cloud obscured its light. (3) That John's reference to the darkness strictly belongs to the time when Mary set forth, not to the time of her arrival, as indeed the words might be rendered 'Mary is coming to the sepulchre:' compare ver. 3, where we read that Peter and John 'were coming to,' *i. e.* they *came towards* the tomb. It is easy to understand that the writer of the last words in chap. 13: 30 would in thought naturally dwell upon the outward darkness as symbolical of the mental state of Mary and her fellow-disciples. The stone which had been fitted into the door of the sepulchre had been taken away; and, without observing the particulars which are recorded below (vers. 6, 7), Mary hastens to tell what she has seen.

Ver. 2. That the Lord is risen does not enter into her thoughts: she can but imagine that enemies have stolen away the body so precious alike in her eyes and in those of her fellow-disciples, and she hastens to tell the tale to those who would feel with her most deeply and would be most able to help in the sad extremity. The statement of Mary produces its immediate effect upon the disciples.

3 him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other dis-
4 ciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran
both together: and the other disciple outran Peter,
5 and came first to the tomb; and stooping and look-
ing in he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he
6 not in. Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following
him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth
7 the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon
his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled

Ver. 3. The word rendered 'went forth' is so often used in this Gospel in regard to the most solemn events in the life of Jesus, as implying a Divine mission, the accomplishment of a Divine purpose, that we may well doubt whether the Evangelist does not here employ the word in the same pregnant sense. It is possible also that there is design in the manner in which the names of the two apostles are introduced: not 'Peter and the other disciple went forth,' but 'Peter went forth, and the other disciple.' The other examples of this construction in the Fourth Gospel tend to show that here John intends to set forth Peter as the main person in the narrative: thus the whole ground is cut away from those who hold that the design of this section is to bring 'the other disciple' into peculiar prominence.

Ver. 4. It is extremely probable that John was the younger and thus also the more active of the two. The same supposition throws light on the next verse.

Ver. 5. **And stooping down, and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet went he not in.** A feeling of awe and mystery in all probability possessed him. He was afraid to enter. It was not so with Peter.

Vers. 6, 7. Peter, ever bold and daring, is less overcome by awe than his companion. He goes into the sepulchre, and when within sees not only that the linen cloths are lying there, but also, what John had not observed (ver. 5), that the covering placed upon the head of Jesus had been carefully (for this is clearly implied in the word) rolled up, and laid in a place by itself,—in all likelihood where the head had lain. By the mention of these circumstances, the Evangelist appears to indicate the calm and orderly manner in which Jesus had left the sepulchre. They were inconsistent with the idea, either of a hasty flight, or of a violent removal of the body: and it is probable that John would hint at the dawning consciousness of this in Peter's mind by changing the verb 'seeth,' used in his own case, into 'beholdeth' in the case of his companion. The effect produced upon John by Peter's entrance into the sepulchre was what might have been expected. He takes courage, and also enters.

8 up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore
the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb,
9 and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not
the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.
10 So the disciples went away again unto their own
home.

Ver. 8. It is certainly not a belief of the statement of Mary that is expressed in this last word. As John stood gazing on the signs which bore their silent witness that the body of Jesus had not been taken away by violent hands, the truth revealed itself to him,—that Jesus had of Himself left the tomb. But even more than this is probably intended by the word 'believed.' To receive the truth of the Resurrection was to be led to a deeper and more real faith in Jesus Himself. The uncertainties, doubts, and difficulties occasioned by the events of the days just passed disappeared from John's mind. He 'believed' in Jesus as being what He truly was, the Son of God, the Saviour of man.

Ver. 9. The connection between this and the preceding verse is readily perceived:—'He *saw* and believed,'—sight was needed to evoke this faith,—*for* not even yet had they learnt that thus it was 'written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead' (Luke 24: 46). It may be doubted whether self-reproach is to be found in this statement,—to the extent, at least, that is commonly supposed. The words seem rather to flow from the conviction which has so strong a hold of the Evangelist, that only in the presence of actual experience do the power and meaning of the Divine Word come forth. The *fact* was needed in order to illustrate and explain the *scripture;* and then that faith which has been resting on the inward perception of the glory of Jesus receives confirmation from the discovery that the truth received was long ago made known by God as a part of His own counsel. As in all other places (unless 19: 28 be an exception, see note there) John uses 'the scripture' in the sense of a particular passage of Scripture (see chap. 2: 22), we are here led to think of Ps. 16: 10 as probably being before his mind. It will be remembered that this was 'the scripture' to which Peter first made appeal as a prophecy of the Resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2: 27).

Ver. 10. We are not told why or in what frame of mind they thus returned to their own homes. One thing is clear: they believed that Jesus was risen, and that it was vain to search for Him in the tomb.

## CHAPTER 20: 11–18.

### *Jesus risen.*

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the
12 tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body
13 of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman,

*Jesus risen*, vers. 11–18.

CONTENTS.—The paragraph now before us presents an advance upon that last considered. There we had only preparation for the risen Jesus; here we have Jesus risen. There all was negative: Jesus was not in the tomb, and the inference was that He was risen. Here all is positive. The risen One appears to Mary, proclaiming Himself, and sends a message to His disciples.

Ver. 11. **But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.** Peter and John had returned to their homes. Mary had followed them when they first ran to the sepulchre; but (probably in consequence of their eager haste) she had not reached it before they departed. Nothing at least is said of her having met them and been addressed by them. She stands there with no thought of a resurrection in her mind, but believing only that the body has been taken away, and therefore weeping with loud lamentation (comp. on chap. 11: 34, 35).

Ver. 12. In each of the accounts of the Resurrection an angelic appearance is recorded—in every case an appearance to the women who came to the tomb; by Peter and John no angels had been seen (vers. 5, 6). The 'white' garments are the symbol of purity and glory; see the references in the margin, and also Rev. 3: 4, 5; 6: 11; 19: 14, etc. That one of the angels was 'at the head' and the other 'at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain,' is to be regarded as expressive of the fact that the body was wholly under the guardianship of Heaven. This is not the place to enter upon any discussion of the general credibility of the angelic appearances recorded in Scripture. They are too often and too circumstantially spoken of to permit us to resolve them into mere figures of speech: nor can we have any difficulty in believing that in the great universe of God there should be such an order of beings as that described by the term 'angels.' If, however, they may exist, their manifestation of themselves must be regarded as also possible; and the manner of the manifestation—their appearing to some and not to others, their appearing suddenly and then as suddenly disappearing—is to be looked at as dependent upon laws of which we can say nothing, because we have ourselves no practical experience of them.

Ver. 13. Mary's reply betrays neither consternation nor even sur-

why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because
they have taken away my Lord, and I know not
14 where they have laid him. When she had thus said,
she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus stand-
15 ing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith
unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest
thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith

prise: her excitement is such that the wonderful ceases to be wonderful to her. Her words are exactly the same as those spoken by her in ver. 2, except that, as she is now expressing simply her own feelings, and not those of companions, the utterance becomes more tender: thus, for 'the Lord' and 'we know,' we here read 'my Lord,' '*I* know.' She thus comes before us as more fully prepared for receiving a manifestation of the risen Saviour; and that no answer of the angels is recorded, may be regarded as a token on the part of the Evangelist that to such a faith Jesus will reveal Himself directly, and without the interposition of any other.

Ver. 14. Mary has answered the inquiry of the angels; and, satisfied that the Lord is not in the sepulchre, she turns round to see if information regarding Him can be obtained from any other source. Could we think that the morning was still dark, it might be possible to trace Mary's non-recognition of Jesus to that cause; but, if light was already dawning when she came first to the sepulchre, day must by this time have fully broken. That she did not know Jesus must, therefore, have proceeded from some other cause. This could not be the outward glory of His appearance, or she would not have supposed Him to be the gardener (ver. 15). Nor does it seem desirable to resort to the explanation, that glorified corporeity has the power of making itself visible or invisible, or of assuming different forms of manifestation at its pleasure. Much may be attributed to Mary's total want of preparation for the fact. The idea that Jesus had risen from the grave had not yet dawned upon her: the form now in her presence *could* not be His: no supposition lay so near as that it was the gardener who had drawn near. More, however, must be said; and the key to the solution of the difficulty is to be found in Luke 24: 16 (see also 21: 4). Her 'eyes were holden' that she should not discern her Lord. She was not yet ready for any such recognition as might correspond to the new stage of existence upon which He had entered. She would have seen the human friend—Jesus as He had been, not as He now was. Some further training, therefore, is still needed, and then the glorious revelation shall be given.

Ver. 15. The object of the questions seems to be, to recall Mary to herself and to awaken more deliberate thought. She is confounded by all that has happened, overwhelmed by her emotions, and hence unable to judge justly of what she is to see. The questioning and

unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.
16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say,
17 [1] Master. Jesus saith to her, [2] Touch me not; for I

[1] Or, *Teacher.*

[2] Or, *Take not hold on me.*

answering bring her back to calmness and self-possession.—So much is Mary absorbed in her own thoughts, and so completely is her mind filled with one great subject, that she imagines that every one must at once enter into her feelings. Accordingly she does not even mention the name of Jesus, but asks whether the gardener has borne 'Him' away. She seeks but to learn where He is, that (for no recollection of woman's weakness presents itself to hinder the thought) she may take Him to another tomb. As she speaks, her faith and love are drawn forth in increasing measure, and the moment is at hand when they shall be satisfied.

Ver. 16. **Jesus saith unto her, Mary.** That single word completes her present training. Nor is this wonderful. She is calmer now; the intervening conversation has produced this effect. Then again we cannot doubt that there would be more of the old tenderness of Jesus in the pronunciation of her name than in the words as yet spoken to her. The very mark, indeed, of the relation between Jesus and His people, when that relation is conceived of in its most tender form, is that 'He calleth His own sheep by name' (10: 3). We are not to imagine that it is only the sound of the voice that is now recognized by Mary. By the name, by the tone in which the name is uttered, a whole flood of recollections is brought up. All the deepest and most solemn impressions that had been produced upon her by her former intercourse with Jesus are re-awakened in power. She recalls not merely what was most human, but what was most Divine in Him. Yet it would seem, from the epithet that she immediately applies to our Lord, that she thinks of Him as standing to her in some at least of the old relations. It is not strange that it should be so; any experience that she had had of resurrections through the power of Christ had been of resurrections to the former conditions of life. But now she is prepared for more, and therefore she shall be taught to know Jesus fully.—**She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni, which is to say, Teacher.** The title thus used by Mary is probably the provincial form Rabban or Rabbi, and it is found in the New Testament only here, and in the Gospel of Mark (chap. 10: 51), noted, as is well known, for its use of expressions from the common tongue. It means properly 'My Master,' and is thus expressive of love and devotedness as well as of respect and reverence. As Mary uttered the word, she must have endeavored to fall down at the feet of her Lord, embracing them (comp. Matt. 28: 9).

Ver. 17. Many different interpretations have been given of these am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

words, some coarse, others either requiring the introduction into the text of thoughts that are not there, or too far-fetched and mystical.—The meaning has been made more difficult by a want of sufficient attention to the force of the words 'Touch me not;' for these words do not express the touch of a moment only, but a touch that continues for a time. They are equivalent to 'Keep not thy touch upon me,' 'Handle me not,' 'Cling not to me.' Mary would have held her Lord fast with the grasp of earthly friendship and love. She needed to be taught that the season for such bodily touching of the Word of Life was past. But, as it passed, the disciples were not to be left desolate: the season for another touching—deeper, because spiritual—began. Jesus would return to His Father, and would send forth His Spirit to dwell with His disciples. Then they should see Him, hear Him, handle Him, touch Him, in the only way in which He can now be seen and heard and handled and touched. In a true and living faith they shall embrace Him with a touch never more to be withdrawn or interrupted. Hence the important word 'brethren.' Those to whom the message is sent are more than disciples; they are 'brethren' of their Lord. His Father is their Father, and His God their God. They are entering upon a state of spiritual fellowship with the Father similar to His own; and that fellowship is to be the distinguishing characteristic of their new condition. Thus the message sent by Mary to the 'brethren' of the Lord is not a mere message that He has risen from the grave. The thought of His resurrection is rather embraced only as a part of a new and permanent state of things which has come in. Even here, however, it is important to observe that the distinction between our Lord and His disciples is still carefully preserved. Jesus does not say '*Our* Father,' but '*My* Father and *your* Father;' so that the significance of 'brethren' lies in this, that the word is used in the very verse which proclaims so clearly the difference between Him and them.—The words 'the Father,' in the first part of the Lord's address to Mary, ought not to pass unnoticed. The reader may compare what has been said on chap. 8: 27. He will then see that the expression 'the Father' here combines in one thought all that is implied in the four designations that follow: 'My Father,' 'Your Father,' 'My God,' 'Your God.'—'I ascend' is not to be understood (as some have maintained) of an immediate ascension, inconsistent alike with the forty days of Acts 1: 3 and with the subsequent narratives of this very Gospel. Yet neither are we to understand it as if it meant 'I will ascend' at some future day. The use of the present is to be explained by the consideration that the Resurrection of our Lord was really the beginning of His Ascension. At that point earth ceased to be the Saviour's home as it had been; and He Himself was no longer in it what He had been. Thus it

18 Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and *how that* he had said these things unto her.

## CHAPTER 20: 19–23.

### *The First Manifestation of Himself by the Risen Lord.*

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut

might be said by Him: 'I ascend.' 'My ascent is begun, and shall be soon completed; then shall I enter into My glory, and the Spirit shall be bestowed in all His fulness.'—The contrast between the relation in which Jesus places Himself to Mary in this verse, and to Thomas in ver. 27 (comp. Luke 24: 39), has often been dwelt upon as if it afforded evidence of the untrustworthy nature of the whole narrative before us. Yet a moment's consideration will satisfy any one that the difference in our Lord's object on these two occasions necessarily involved a difference in His treatment of those whom He would lead to a full knowledge of Himself. Thomas has to be convinced that He who stands before him is indeed his Lord and Master risen from the grave. Mary believes that Jesus is risen, but needs further instruction as to His present state. To have treated the latter in the same manner as the former would have been to make Mary stop short of the very point to which Jesus would conduct her. To have treated the former as the latter would have been to unfold to Thomas the mystery of the resurrection-state of Jesus, while he had not yet accepted the fact that the resurrection had taken place.

Ver. 18. Mary has now recognized her Lord. We have seen her longing, with weeping eyes and breaking heart, for the Friend whom she had loved on earth. She was prepared for more, and more was given. Her Master was revealed to her, not as the human Friend alone, but in all that awakened at the same time her reverence and awe, in all that reminded her of the Divine in Him. Thus she was ready for another step, and she was led that step forward. She saw before her the risen and glorified Lord; and she could look forward to the future, inviting at the same time the disciples to join her in the prospect, as a future in which He who is forever with the Father should be forever, by His Spirit, with her and them, weeping changed into joy, and defeat into victory. With a message of this kind, she goes to the disciples, and they are prepared for what is now to follow.

*The First Manifestation of Himself by the Risen Lord,* vers. 19–23.

CONTENTS.—Mary Magdalene has carried to the disciples the tidings with which she was charged. We have now the first appearance to them of the Risen Lord.

Ver. 19. The message sent by the Lord to His disciples through where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them,

Mary Magdalene was, 'I ascend unto the Father.' In other words, it was an intimation to them that that glorification had begun whose distinguishing feature would be the bestowal of the Spirit upon the members of Christ's body. In this thought lies the connection between the last narrative and that now before us, as well as the special point of view from which the Evangelist desires us to look at the manifestation of the Risen One which he is about to relate. In this also we see the difference of aim between John and Luke, in what is universally allowed to be the record of the same scene (Luke 24: 36–43). Luke would prove to us the reality of the Resurrection body, and would show that Jesus is substantially the same as He had been: John would show us that, while He is substantially the same, yet it is Jesus *filled with the Spirit* whom we behold. Hence the structure of John's narrative, in which it will be observed that the second 'Peace be unto you' (ver. 21) takes up again the same expression in ver. 19 (comp. on chap. 13: 3), and that ver. 20 is in a certain sense parenthetical. This aim of our Evangelist also explains the stress which is laid upon the fact that this manifestation of Jesus took place 'when the doors had been shut.' That we are to see something miraculous in this is clear, alike from the repetition of the statement below (ver. 26), and from the whole tone and bearing of the narrative. Any idea, therefore, of the withdrawal of the bolts of the doors must be at once dismissed. It is impossible to do justice to the passage unless we admit that, at a moment when the doors were shut, and when no one could enter through them in the ordinary way, Jesus suddenly stood in the midst of the disciples. But this is all that we have any right to say. The travesty of the whole scene presented by those who have ridiculed the idea that a body with 'flesh and bones' (Luke 24: 39) should penetrate through the substance of the wood, finds no countenance in the words with which we have to deal. Such a thought is not present to the mind of John. He dwells himself, and he would have us dwell, upon the simple circumstance that, at an instant when an ordinary human body could not have entered the apartment because the doors were shut, the glorified Jesus 'came and stood in the midst.' Thus looked at, the passage sets before us what is no doubt miraculous, what is at variance with our present knowledge of the properties of a material frame, but at the same time nothing unworthy of the solemnity of the hour. As at Emmaus Jesus suddenly disappeared from those whose eyes were opened and who knew Him, so here He appears with equal suddenness to those who are ready to recognize Him. How He thus appeared through the physical obstacles presented by a room closed on every side it is not possible for us to say. The properties of matter spiritualized and glorified are entirely unknown to us from any experience of our own, nor is light thrown upon them here further than this,—that Jesus, in His glorified hu-

20 Peace *be* unto you. And when he had said this, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

manity, had the power of being present when He pleased, without reference to the ordinary laws which control the movements of men. In this absolute subjection of the body to the spirit, John sees proof and illustration of the fact that in the person of Jesus dualism has disappeared, and that the perfect unity of body and spirit has been reached. The old struggle between the material and the spiritual, between the limited and the unlimited, has been brought to an end: the spiritual and unlimited have absolute control. As 'the first Adam became a living soul,' so 'the second Adam became a life-giving Spirit' (1 Cor. 15: 45), and such life of the Spirit the disciples shall immediately receive.—The salutation of the Saviour when He manifested Himself was 'Peace be unto you;' and the meaning and force of the salutation are deepened by the contrast with the 'fear of the Jews' spoken of immediately before. As in chap. 14: 27 (see commentary), this is the salutation of a departing Master, not of a dying Father. Amidst the troubles of the world upon which the disciples are about to enter, and when there is no help from man, Jesus is at hand to speak peace: 'In the world' they 'have tribulation,' but in Him 'peace' (chap. 16: 33).—It will be observed that the Evangelist seems carefully to distinguish between 'the disciples' (vers. 18, 19) and 'the Twelve' (ver. 24). Hence we should naturally conclude that this manifestation of the Risen Lord was not limited to the apostles; and Luke 24: 13 shows that this conclusion is correct.

Ver. 20. **And when he had said this, he showed unto them both his hands and his side.** If the words of Luke 24: 40 are genuine. the feet were also shown; but the genuineness of that passage is too doubtful to permit us to argue from it with confidence. In whatever respects the glorified body of Jesus differed from what it had been before His death, there was at least enough of resemblance to make identification not only possible but the necessary result of careful observation; and it is worthy of note that the very Evangelist who has given us the most striking conception of the change which it had undergone, is the one by whom the identification is also most clearly established. We shall err, however, if we think that the *only* object which Jesus had in view in showing His hands and His side was identification. He would also connect His present glorification with His past *sufferings.* Even now, amidst His glory, His people must not forget that His path to it had been the Cross. He is the Lamb that was 'slain' (comp. Rev. 5: 6, 12).—**The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.** These words describe the effect of the manifestation upon the disciples (comp. chap. 16: 22). They who thus rejoice when they see Him are prepared for further manifestations of His grace.

21 Jesus therefore said unto them again, Peace *be* unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I

Ver. 21. The words are exactly the same as before (ver. 19), but they must have gone home with a deeper power to the hearts of the disciples, who now understood more fully the Person from whom they came. They prepare the way for the great commission to be given,—a commission which, amidst all the trials it would bring with it from the world, the disciples are to execute in peace.—**Even as the Father hath sent me, I also send you.** The words 'even as' bring out the close correspondence between the mission of Jesus Himself and that upon which He sends His disciples. In both cases it was a mission of self-denying love to men; in both one of labor, suffering, and death, followed by glory; in both we have the thought of willing service imposed by an authority that is supreme. We have already met with words expressing a very similar thought in our Lord's intercessory prayer: 'Even as Thou didst send Me into the world, I also sent them into the world' (17: 18). But there is one important point of difference, which an English translation fails to exhibit. In chap. 17 the Greek word for 'sent' is the same in both members of the sentence; in the verse before us it is otherwise. Here the former clause ('Even as the Father hath *sent* Me') contains the word of chap. 17: 18 (*apostello*), but in the latter clause ('I also *send* you') the verb is different (*pempo*). The distinction in meaning seems to be that the second word expresses *mission*, the first more properly *commission*. When the first is used, our thoughts turn to a special embassy, and special instructions which the ambassador receives; the second brings into view rather the authority of the sender and the obedience of the sent. Both words, therefore, may be used either of our Lord or of His disciples. Thus in more than twenty verses of this Gospel Jesus applies the second word to Himself (see especially chap. 4: 34, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me'); whilst in such passages as 6: 29; 17: 3; 8, 18, 21, 23, 25, we find instead the more expressive word. In 5: 36, 37, and again in 7: 28, 29, the two are brought together as they are here; and the appropriateness of each word in its place may readily be seen. In 5: 37 and 7: 28 our thought must rest chiefly on the Sender; but in 5: 36 and 7: 29 on the commission which the Father has given to His Son. On the other hand, the word *apostello* is used by Jesus in regard to His disciples in chap. 4: 38 ('I sent you to reap') as well as in chap. 17: 18; and is indeed the word from which the distinctive name of the Twelve, 'apostles,' is derived. Various thoughts are suggested here by the marked and sudden transition from one word to the other. It may be said with truth that, as 17: 18 has its primary application to apostles, the word which designates their special office was naturally chosen there; here, on the contrary (see note on ver. 19), the disciples in general are addressed,—the disciples who are the representatives of the whole Church of Christ. Again, the word by which

22 you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the [1]Holy

[1] Or, *Holy Spirit.*

Jesus here expresses the mission of His disciples (*pempo*), is one which brings into relief their *separation* from His bodily presence: formerly they were continually at His side, but now they must be dismissed for their labor throughout the world (Matt. 28: 19). One other thought it is impossible to overlook. There is peculiar dignity in the avoidance on the part of the Risen Lord of that form of speech which would seem to identify two relations which (however closely they may sometimes be associated) are essentially distinct. No human disciples can really bear the commission of Jesus *as* Jesus bears that which He has received from the Father (comp. note on ver. 17). By design, therefore, the Lord here, reserving for Himself the higher word, speaks of the disciples as His envoys to the world. The commission which they hold from Him receives separate mention in a later verse (ver. 23).

Ver. 22. Not only did the Risen Lord thus send His disciples on their mission to the world, He gave them also the preparation which should enable them to fulfil their trust. The literal and correct rendering of the original Greek is not 'Receive *the* Holy Spirit,' but 'Receive Holy Spirit;' the difference being, as was pointed out on 7: 39, that by the latter expression we are to understand not the personal Holy Ghost, but His power or influence over the hearts of men. It was in the power of Holy Spirit that Jesus had entered upon His own ministry (Luke 4: 1, where the same expression is used as here); with the like preparation shall His Church enter upon the work to which she is called. The gift now bestowed is, therefore, not simply symbolical, but real; at that moment the Spirit was given. All this is in perfect harmony with the words of 7: 39, because at this moment the glorification of Jesus has begun (see note on ver. 17). The gift, too, was imparted not to apostles only, but to all the disciples present; it is a gift not for the ministry alone, but for the whole Church of Christ. If so, the interesting question immediately arises, What is the relation of the gift spoken of here to that bestowed at Pentecost? The answer would seem to be that here the gift relates to the inner life of the disciples, there to the more outward equipment for their work; here to the enlightenment and quickening of their own souls, there to preparation for producing an effect on others. Perhaps we may seek an illustration (to be applied, as always, with reserve) from the life of the Saviour Himself. As His public ministry began when the Holy Spirit descended on Him at His baptism, so did His apostles receive their full commission and power on the day of Pentecost. But as before His baptism the Holy Spirit had rested on Him continually, so now, before Pentecost, the same holy influence is bestowed on His disciples, preparing them for the day of final consecration to their work. It has, indeed, often been maintained that we have before us

23 Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

a promise, and not a present gift. But such cannot be the meaning of the language which is here used. Even were it granted that the word 'Receive' might be understood as an assurance of a future gift, the action which accompanies the word must imply much more than this. 'He breathed on them;' this surely was the outward symbol of an actual impartation—of His *breathing into* them (see Gen. 2: 7, where the same word is used) the power and influence of which He spoke. And yet it is true that this gift was both present (actual) and also future (a promise). As present, it brought with it the quickening of spiritual life; as future, it included in itself all that Pentecost gave. The former thought is important in relation to the development of the disciples; the latter in its connection with ver. 23, and especially in its presentation of the Redeemer as Himself the Giver of the Holy Spirit (16: 26).

Ver. 23. **If ye shall have remitted the sins of any, they have been remitted unto them; if ye retain the sins of any, they have been retained.** We regard two points as established from what has been already said: 1. The words of this verse are not addressed to apostles alone; 2. Though conjoined with a present impartation of the Holy Spirit, they belong really to the days when the disciples shall have fully entered on their work as representatives of their Lord and His witnesses in the world. This verse and the last stand in the closest possible connection: only when the Holy Spirit has been received, can such a commission as this be executed. Without unduly entering on controverted ground, let us seek to collect the meaning which the words (which we have thought it desirable to render with unusual closeness) must necessarily bear. It is clear that *two* remissions of sin are spoken of—two which agree in one. Where Christ's servants 'have remitted the sins of any,' these sins 'have been remitted unto them'—remitted absolutely, *i. e.* remitted by God, for 'who can forgive sins but God only?' (Mark 2: 7). But as we know that the Divine forgiveness is suspended on certain conditions—penitence and faith—it follows that the remission granted by Christ's disciples must (since it agrees with the Divine remission) be suspended on the same conditions. Either, therefore, the disciples must possess unfailing insight into man's heart (such as in certain cases was granted to an apostle, see Acts 5: 3), or the remission which they proclaim must be *conditionally* proclaimed. No one can maintain the former alternative. It follows, then, that what our Lord here commits to His disciples, to His Church, is the right authoritatively to declare, in His name, that there is forgiveness for man's sin, and on what conditions the sin will be forgiven. Nor does there seem to be ground for thinking that we have here a special application by one individual, whether

## CHAPTER 20: 24–29.

### *The Second Manifestation of Himself by the Risen Lord.*

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called [1] Didymus,

[1] That is, *Twin.*

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minister or not, to another of the remission (or retention) of sin spoken of. The use of 'any' in the plural number appears to be inconsistent with such a view. It is not a direct address by one person to another that is spoken of: 'I declare that *thy* sins are thus authoritatively remitted or retained.' It is a proclamation from one collective body to another—from the Church to the world. The mission of the Church is to announce to the world her own existence in her Lord, as a company of forgiven men, and to invite the world to join her. Let the world comply with the invitation, it shall enjoy forgiveness in the company of the forgiven; let it refuse the invitation, it can only have its sins retained in the company of those who have been 'judged already' (comp. 3: 18). Here, as in all else, the Church only *witnesses* to what her Lord *does.* But as it is by her *life*, even more than by *words*, that she witnesses, so it is by accepting or rejecting her life that her witness is accepted or rejected; and thus it is that by communion with her the blessing is enjoyed, that by separation from her it is forfeited. It ought particularly to be noticed that of the two remissions or retentions of sin spoken of in the words before us, the Divine act, although the last to be mentioned, is the first in thought—'*have been* remitted,' '*have been* retained.'

### *The Second Manifestation of Himself by the Risen Lord*, vers. 24–29.

CONTENTS.—We have here a second appearance of Jesus to the disciples, distinguished from that coming immediately before, inasmuch as it seems especially intended to set forth the blessedness of those who believe without seeing. Ver. 29 evidently forms the climax of the whole, and presents to us the point of view from which we are to look at this narrative in contrast with the preceding one. How fitting was it that thus, at the moment when the Gospel message was about to be carried into all lands, and when faith in an unseen Saviour was the only faith that could be preached, a special blessing should be pronounced on those who should not see, but yet should believe! When we regard the paragraph now before us in this light, a remarkable correspondence presents itself between the three appearances of the Risen Saviour in this chapter and the three parts into which the intercessory prayer of chap. 17 divides itself. The first appearance corresponds to the first part of the prayer, for in each we see Jesus Himself The second corresponds to the second part, for in each we see Jesus in relation to His immediate disciples. The third again corresponds to the third part, for in each we see Jesus in relation to all who should yet believe in Him.

Ver. 24. On the object of thus interpreting the name Thomas, see on 11: 16. It is impossible to think that the Evangelist translates the

25 was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were with-

word for the mere purpose of mentioning that Thomas had a Greek as well as an Aramaic name. The man appears in the name.

Ver. 25. Thomas received information from his fellow-disciples of the first manifestation of Himself by Jesus; but he is not satisfied.—In other words, he will not believe unless He sees. Yet it hardly seems as if the Resurrection of Jesus were the sole object of his incredulity. That is no doubt primarily in view; but we have already seen that the word 'believe' must be understood in a fuller and deeper sense at ver. 8, and the same remark applies to its use in ver. 29. It includes therefore belief in Jesus as the glorified Lord, as the Redeemer who has completely accomplished the purpose of His mission, and in whom the highest hopes of Israel are fulfilled. To Thomas the death upon the cross had appeared to crush these hopes forever. Could he be convinced of the Resurrection, they would revive; and he would believe not merely in that miracle as an isolated fact, but in the whole redeeming work of which it was the culmination and the seal. Thus also we are not to imagine that he is content to waver between conviction and doubt. His old love for his Lord—that love which seems to have burned in the breast of no apostle more warmly than in his—still continues. His mood has been one of disappointment and sorrow; and the sorrow is deepened in exact proportion to the height of his previous expectations, and to what he knows will be the joyful result if he be able to believe the tidings of the Resurrection. The harsh impression generally made by these words of Thomas is probably in no small measure due to the unfortunate translation 'thrust,' which suggests the thought of coarseness and recklessness of speech. But there is no such meaning in the original. The word is indeed the same as that in the previous clause which the translators of the Authorized Version themselves render by 'put.' What Thomas desires is certainly more than had been granted to the others. Jesus '*showed* unto them both His hands and His side' (ver. 20); but Thomas would *touch* them. Had he been present at the first manifestation, he would probably have been satisfied with the evidence that was enough for his fellow-apostles. At all events, he is now ready to believe, if only what seems to him sufficient evidence is given; and his desire is granted.

Ver. 26. The place of assembly was without doubt the same as before; and that the apostles were assembled on the Sunday appears to

in, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be*
27 unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy

indicate that they already regarded the first day of the week as a day which the Risen Lord would peculiarly bless.

Ver. 27. Jesus at once speaks without needing to be told of the doubts of Thomas. At the same time He recognizes the naturalness of that element of weakness which marked the faith of His disciple, and He will so meet it that it may give place to strength. As before, under the word 'believing' we must understand not belief in the Resurrection only, but a full faith in Jesus Himself as the Saviour who has triumphed over all His foes, and has accomplished the purposes of His love.

Ver. 28. Thomas passes at once from the depths of his despondency and hesitation to the most exalted faith. The words 'My Lord and my God,' are certainly addressed to Jesus; and it is unnecessary to combat the position that they are only an expression of the apostle's thankfulness to God for what he has seen. They are a triumphant confession of his faith, not simply in the Resurrection, but in Him whom he sees before him in all the Divinity both of His Person and of His work. Yet we are not to imagine that only now for the first time did such thoughts enter his mind. They had been long vaguely entertained, long feebly cherished. Nor can we doubt that they had been gaining strength, when they were suddenly dashed by that death upon the cross with which it seemed impossible to reconcile them. Then came the tidings of the Resurrection, even in themselves most startling, but to Thomas (we may well suppose) more startling than to any of the other apostles. Were they true? He saw in an instant how incalculable would be the consequences. It was this very perception of the greatness of the tidings that led him to reject them. His state of mind had been the same as in 11: 16, where, when Jesus hinted at giving life, he went rather to the opposite extreme, and thought of a death that would involve not only Lazarus but them all. Thus also now. He hears that Jesus is risen, and his first impulse is to say, 'It cannot be: thick darkness cannot pass at once into such glorious light; the despair which is justified by what has happened cannot at once be transformed into inextinguishable confidence and hope. This depth of feeling prepared him for the completeness of the revulsion that now took place. For a week he had been able to meditate on all that he had both seen and heard. We cannot doubt that during that time the sayings of his Lord about His resurrection, as well as His death, would all return to his memory. He would see that what was said to have happened had been foretold; after all it was not to be rejected as impossible. He would think with himself what kind or amount of proof could convince him that the fact was

hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless,
28 but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him,
29 My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, [1] thou hast believed: blessed
*are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

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[1] Or, *hast thou believd?*

true; and he would be unable to fall upon any harder proof than that which his incredulity had suggested in the moment of its first strength. But, if that proof can be given, then how powerfully would he feel the injustice which by his doubting he had done his Master! With what force would intimations, once dark but now bright in the light of the supposed Resurrection, come home to him! His very highest expectations would seem to him to have been warranted, and more than warranted, by the facts. We need not wonder that, having passed through a week so rich in training power, Thomas, when he did behold the Risen Lord, should have leaped at once from his former unbelief to faith in its highest stage, or that he should have exclaimed to Jesus 'My Lord and my God.' It may even be doubted if, before this confession was made, he found it necessary to put his finger into the print of the nails or his hand into the wounded side. It was enough to '*see*' (ver. 29). Those who study the structure of the Fourth Gospel will hardly fail to trace in the incident thus placed at the close of its narrative the tendency of the Evangelist to return upon his own early steps. He had begun with 'the Word' who 'was God;' he closes with the highest truth accepted and ratified by those to whom the revelation was given. The last witness borne by one of them in the body of the Gospel narrative is, 'My Lord and my God!'

Ver. 29. The words are intended for the Church now about to be called out of the world,—for the Church of all ages, which by the very necessity of the case must believe without seeing. What then is the contrast which Jesus has in view? Can it be a contrast between faith which wishes to *see* the miraculous fact in order to accept it, and faith which accepts the fact on the ground of simple testimony? Such an explanation limits unduly the meaning of the word 'believe.' It substitutes one kind of seeing for another (for what does testimony do but place us in the position of the original witnesses?); and, by failing to bring us into direct contact with the Person of Jesus, it lowers the state of mind to which the blessedness of the Gospel is attached. The contrast is of a deeper kind,—between a faith resting entirely upon outward evidence of Divine claims, and a faith resting higher and resting upon that intuitive perception of the Divine in Jesus which is afforded by the consideration of what He is in Himself as the Crucified and Risen Lord. In the ages of the Church which were to follow the 'going away' of Jesus, it was needful that faith should rest first upon testimony: but it was not to *pause* there. It was to rest upon the spiritual apprehension of that to which testimony is

## CHAPTER 20: 30–31.

### *Summary of the Gospel.*

30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this

borne,—of that which the Lord is in Himself as the embodiment of the Divine, and the unchanging spring of the heavenly power and grace which are manifested in His people. Thus to us, who are separated by many centuries from the time when the Lord was personally present in the world, is the blessed assurance given that, though we have not seen Him, we may love Him; and that, though now we see Him not, we may rejoice in Him with a joy unspeakable and glorified (1 Pet. 1: 8). We need not envy Thomas or his fellow-apostles. They were blessed in their faith; we may be even more blessed in ours. The more we penetrate through the outward to the inward, through the flesh to the spirit, through communion with the earthly to communion with the heavenly Lord, the more do we learn to know the fulness that is in Him, in whom 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' and in whom we are 'complete' (Col. 2: 9, 10).

### *Summary of the Gospel*, vers. 30, 31.

CONTENTS.—The life of Jesus has now been traced from His eternal pre-existence as the Logos, through His manifestation of Himself in action and suffering upon earth, to the beginning of His glorification. The Evangelist has thus accomplished the purpose that he had proposed to himself; and he now sums up the particulars of the picture that he has presented, and states the nature of the end that it is designed to serve. It has indeed been urged that the verses before us are the conclusion only of the history given in the Gospel. It is enough to say that this supposition is refuted by the words 'this book,' and by what we shall find to be the purport of the verses.

Vers. 30, 31. Almost every word of this statement is of the utmost importance. 'Many other signs did Jesus:' hence it is only a *selection* that has been given in the book. The writer knows much more of a similar character and fitted to make a similar impression, but he has not deemed it necessary to tell it. What he has related are 'signs,'—not simply miracles of Divine power, but manifestations (now in deed, and now in word) of an inner meaning, illustrating the Divine in Him by whom the deeds are performed or the words spoken. 'In the presence of His disciples:' why not in the presence of the world? Had they not been done in public as well as in private, before enemies as well as friends? They had: but it is not upon them as signs which ought to have convinced the unbelieving that the Evangelist has chiefly dwelt. As he recalled them, he once more beheld Jesus in the midst of the little band of His disciples, making manifest His *glory* to them alone; while they apprehended that glory, forgetful of everything but itself, and the feelings of admiration, wonder, de-

31 book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

light, and love which it awakened in their hearts. They thought not of the world at the time; they saw only that all was done for them. So now in the vividness of John's recollection every 'sign' appears exactly as at the moment when it was wrought, full of meaning to disciples; to others,—nay, it is not necessary to mention them at all (comp. 17: 9; 1 John 5: 16). 'But these are written:' that is, these 'signs' are written. The Gospel then is a record of 'signs,' and whatever else it contains must be regarded as subordinate to them. 'That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God:'—words by which we are not to understand that the signs have been written in order that unbelieving readers may be led to acknowledge the claims of Jesus. The word 'believe' is not used in the sense of being brought to faith, as if those addressed had not had faith before. They are already believers, disciples, friends. What has been aimed at is not the first formation but the *deepening* of faith within them (such as that of which we read in 2: 11, where we are told that His disciples 'believed' in Him), by which they are led into a truer knowledge of their Lord, as well as into a more intimate communion with Him and, in Him, with the Father. To make his readers rest in faith, so that faith shall not be a mere conclusion of the intellect, but the element and spirit of their lives, is what the writer has proposed to himself. 'And that, believing, ye may have life:' not, that, being brought to faith through the record which he gives, they may obtain life in Jesus; but that, as already believing,—*in Him* as the branch is in the vine,—they may in Him enjoy that spiritual and eternal life which He possesses, and which He makes ever more and more largely the portion of His people, as their faith in Him deepens, and their fellowship with Him increases. Finally, 'in His name:' not merely naming His name or confessing Him before men,—but in His *Name*, in Himself as revealed, made known as what He is,—the revelation of the Father, and possessed of all the glorious qualities belonging to the Son. Such is the meaning of these words when they are looked at in the light of those rules of interpretation which are supplied by the Gospel; and, with this meaning, they set before us in the most definite manner the writer's own conception of the task which he had undertaken. They refer obviously, too, to the Gospel as a whole, and not to any single section. At this point, then, the narrative of the Fourth Gospel closes, having exhibited to us that 'life' which was in 'the Word' (chap. 1: 4), and having so set that Word before us that believers, dwelling upon His manifested glory, may be brought to a deeper knowledge of what He is, and to more and fuller life in Him.

## CHAPTER 21: 1–14.

### *Miraculous Draught of Fishes—The Meal on the Shore of the Sea of Galilee.*

1 After these things Jesus manifested himself again

### *Miraculous Draught of Fishes—The Meal on the Shore of the Sea of Galilee.* vers. 1–14.

CONTENTS.—The authenticity and genuineness of the chapter upon which we now enter have been keenly contested; while many, who admit that John is the author of the chapter, see in it not so much an organic part of his original work as a section added at a later date, but before the Gospel had passed beyond the first circle of its readers. The main arguments brought by the defenders of both these views are (1) That in chap. 20: 30, 31, we have what is obviously the close of the Gospel; and (2) That certain expressions of this chapter, particularly those of vers. 24, 25, are inconsistent with the idea of a Johannine authorship. As to the first of these hypotheses, that chap. 20 was not written by John, we need not say more than that it is opposed to all the evidence possessed by us, whether external or internal. Its defenders, therefore, have been few in number as compared with those who have accepted the chapter as genuine. With the latter we agree, entertaining no doubt that the first twenty-three verses at all events are from the hand of the Apostle: of vers. 24 and 25 we shall speak when we reach them. It is more difficult to say whether the chapter is a constituent part of the original plan, or an Appendix added after the Gospel had been finished, and when a longer or shorter period of time had passed. The question is one that must be determined mainly by taking the contents of the chapter into account. When this is done, there seems little reason to doubt that we have here an Epilogue corresponding to the Prologue, and—not less than the latter—properly belonging to the organic structure of the Gospel as a whole. The particular idea which the chapter unfolds is not merely fresh illustration of the glory of the Redeemer's post-resurrection life. Were it no more than this, we should at once allow that the chapter is at best an Appendix to the Gospel. It would be impossible to think that, after having written the words of chap. 20: 30, 31, the Evangelist should *immediately* pass to another illustration of the same thought. No doubt the idea of which we speak is involved in the first narrative of the chapter, which is distinctly stated to be a 'third' manifestation of Himself by the Risen Lord (ver. 14), and is thus placed, in one respect at least, on the same line as the two preceding manifestations of chap. 20. Yet an attentive consideration of that narrative will show that the great truth which the Evangelist beholds in it is, the joy provided by Jesus for His disciples in connection with the work which they accomplish for the conversion of the world,—that the dominating thought which it presents to him is not merely the glory of the Risen Lord, but the glory of Christian work as it is performed through Him, and its fruits are enjoyed with Him. If this be the idea of the first part of the chapter, we shall find, when we come to the commentary, that its second and third parts, relating to the two Apostles, Peter and John, are much more than simple narratives of facts. They lead the thoughts to apostolic work and Christian action, and to waiting for the Second Coming of the Lord. Three leading thoughts are thus presented to us in the chapter, to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and he mani-

which may be thus described:—(1) The mutual joy of the Risen Lord and His disciples in the successful accomplishment of Christ's work, vers. 1–14; (2) The work of Apostolic and Christian witnessing between the Resurrection of Jesus and His Second Coming, vers. 16–19; (3) The Second Coming itself, vers. 20–23. If now we compare these three thoughts with the leading thoughts of the Prologue, the correspondence will appear close and remarkable. In the Prologue as well as here, three main topics are dwelt upon: (1) The Word with God, the Son with the Father, in His general manifestations before His Incarnation, vers. 1–5: (2) The witnessing to Him who was to come, which culminated in John, the representative of Old Testament witness, vers. 6–13; The coming of Jesus into the world, vers. 14–18. In other words we have in the opening and closing parts of the Fourth Gospel—

I. THE PROLOGUE WITH ITS THREE THOUGHTS.—1. The Light to be witnessed to, as it appears in its inner fulness and power. 2. The preparation by witness for that Light. 3. The coming of the Light.

II. THE EPILOGUE WITH ITS THREE THOUGHTS.—1. The Redeemer who is to be witnessed to, as He appears in the joy of successful and accomplished work. 2. The preparation of the world for that joy by the work of witnessing. 3. The Second Coming.

The detailed exposition of these thoughts will appear in the commentary. In the meantime we have said enough to justify our regarding chap. 21 as an Epilogue, as an integral part of the organism of the Gospel as we have it,—its Seventh and last great section. This intimate connection of the chapter with the general plan of the Gospel is the point of real importance, and it is on this that we would lay stress. Whether the Epilogue formed part of the Gospel *from the very first*, or was added by the apostle at a later date, is a subordinate question, and one to which different answers will naturally be given. There are peculiarities of language and of structure which seem decidedly to favor the latter supposition. On the other hand, we should certainly expect that, if the Gospel was ever circulated in two forms (with and without the Appendix), the last chapter would be absent from some of our ancient manuscripts, or would at all events be occasionally found separated from the rest. It is possible, indeed, that the Gospel might in its shorter form be confined to a very limited circle of Christians, and be published for general use when complete. In this form the Appendix theory may perhaps be said to meet the conditions of the case.

The whole structure of the narrative upon which we now enter shows that to the eye of the Evangelist, it is not only *history* but *parable*. As, therefore, it is with a mind alive to the spiritual meaning of the scene that John describes what actually happened, special significance may be looked for in the expressions which he employs.

Ver. 1. The words 'after these things' are indefinite, and throw no light upon the length of the interval that elapsed between the last and the present appearance of Jesus. The point to which the Evangelist calls attention is that we have here another 'manifestation' of Himself by the Risen Saviour, similar to the two mentioned in the previous chapter (comp. chap. 21: 14). What we have before us, therefore, is not merely the fact that Jesus showed Himself to the dis-

2 fested *himself* on this wise. There were together
Simon Peter, and Thomas called [1] Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee,
3 and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith
unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We
also come with thee. They went forth, and entered
into the boat; and that night they took nothing.

[1] That is, *Twin.*

ciples, but that He exhibited Himself in a glory which the natural eye could not have discerned (see chap. 2: 11). It was 'at the sea of Tiberias,' that is, the sea of Galilee, that the manifestation took place. The earlier Evangelists do not relate it, but they give the message of our Lord to His disciples instructing them to go into Galilee, for there they should see Him (Matt. 28: 10, 16; Mark 16: 7). John does not tell us of the message, but he relates the meeting. Surely such notices on the part of the different historians are supplementary, not discordant.

Ver. 2. It is doubtful whether the seven persons here referred to are arranged, as is often supposed, in two groups, one consisting of three, and the other of four members. There may be significance in the mention of Thomas as now (after chap. 20) completely at one with his brother Apostles, and in the fact that Nathanael (comp. 1: 51) is associated with the miracle.

Ver. 3. It is hardly probable that in this the disciples thought of anything but the supply of their temporal wants. To John, however, there is more in their act than this. His word 'went forth' leads us at once to feel that he sees in their going the Providential guidance of God (comp. notes on 18: 1, 4). It is not an ordinary event: it will illustrate that Divine scheme for the salvation of men which was accomplished through Him who 'came forth' from God. Moreover, just as once before Peter and some of his companions had been called from the work of fishing to the first stage of their apostolate (Luke 5: 1–11), so shall he and those with him be called from a similar scene to that higher stage upon which they are now to enter. In Peter's being the first to make the proposal, we see the elements of that character which gave him the prominence he afterward had in the Church of the Redeemer. He is the moving spring of the whole apostolic band; he proposes, and the others say, 'We also come with thee.' Yet writers can be found to urge that one great object of the Fourth Gospel is to depreciate Peter in comparison with John, one of this very company! The seven go forth by 'night' (the usual time for fishing), but they caught nothing. There is reason to think that the season was unfavorable; but they were not successful.—The word used for 'catch' means to lay hold on, and it does not seem to be elsewhere used in the sense of catching fish.

4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on
the beach; howbeit the disciples knew not that it was
5 Jesus. Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children,
have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.
6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right
side of the boat and ye shall find. They cast there-
fore, and now they were not able to draw it up for the
7 multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom
Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So

Ver. 4. **But when morning was now coming, Jesus stood on the shore; the disciples however knew not that it was Jesus.** Night passed away, and the day began to break. Then Jesus stood on the shore, but they did not recognize Him,—it may be that the light was insufficient, it may be that it was not yet His wish that He should be known.

Ver. 5. The word 'children' is a word of tenderness and affection. At the same time it may perhaps have a deeper meaning, for the word 'brethren' in 20: 17, which now expresses the relation of Jesus to His disciples, rather leads directly to the supposition that, in a certain sense, He speaks as One standing on a footing of equality with themselves. There is at least a striking coincidence between the word ('children') here used and that used in Heb. 2: 13 (Isa. 8: 18). He who speaks is engaged in the same occupation, takes the same position, is called to the same work as they. The question which He asks is important, especially the word which is rendered in the Authorized Version 'meat,' but which we have rendered by 'to eat.' For thus we observe the true point of the question,—not, 'Have you *caught* fish?' but, 'Have you fish *to eat?*' The term, however, was commonly used of fish. Here it seems to refer to provision of fish taken by them for eating when they started. It ought to be carefully noted also that, as is shown by the particular form of the question, it is the *meal* that is before the mind of Jesus: only when we see this do we gain the true point of view from which to contemplate the whole narrative. To the question of Jesus the disciples answer 'No.' They thus acknowledge the fruitlessness of their labors, and their need of further light and guidance.

Vers. 6, 7. The incident thus related of each of the two apostles is in closest harmony with everything else that we know of them. John himself gives us a token of his desire that we should see in the action of Peter an illustration of that character which appeared in his whole subsequent career. He does not call him simply Simon Peter; but, as in 18: 10, he interposes a word between the two names,—'Simon, therefore, Peter.' As soon as Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him, 'for he was naked.' There is no reason to think that the nakedness thus spoken of was absolute. The use of the

when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he
girt his coat about him (for he was naked),* and cast
8 himself into the sea. But the other disciples came
in the little boat (for they were not far from the land,
but about two hundred cubits off,) dragging the net
9 *full* of fishes. So when they got out upon the land,
they see [1] a fire of coals there, and [2] fish laid thereon,
10 and [3] bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish
11 which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore

* "was naked" add marg. Or, *had on his under garments only.—Am. Com.*

[1] Gr. *a fire of charcoal.* [2] Or, *a fish.* [3] Or, *a loaf.*

term is consistent (in Greek as in the language of common life in Scotland to this day) with partial clothing. The girding is probably not to pass unnoticed. It was thus that in 13: 4, 5, our Lord prepared Himself for service. His apostle, when preparing for the active service of his Master, must do the same.

Ver. 8. While Peter takes the lead, impetuously dashing into the water (comp. Matt. 14: 29), his fellow-disciples reach land more slowly. Yet they do not actually land the net: they only drag it to the shore. The landing is reserved for him who had displayed greatest earnestness and activity. All now proceeds directly towards the culminating point of the narrative,—the meal.

Ver. 9. **When therefore they came out on the land, they see a fire of charcoal placed there, and a fish placed thereon, and a loaf.** No intimation is given where the fire of charcoal had been obtained, or how it had been brought there. The thoughts of the Evangelist are so entirely occupied with the meal, that it is a matter of no consequence to him to give explanations upon such points. Upon one fact he desires us to fix our attention—the meal is provided by Jesus, whether miraculously or in some ordinary way he does not ask. It is impossible not to notice the words 'a fish' and 'a loaf,' not 'fish' and 'bread:' the contrast with 'the fishes' of ver. 10 is obviously designed.

Ver. 10. The meal consists of materials provided by the combined action of Jesus and His disciples.

Ver. 11. Again Peter appears in all the prominence of his character and work,—the leader of the apostolic company. The fishes drawn to shore by means of the net were 'great;' yet neither by their size nor by their number was the net rent. No fish was lost. (See further below.)—The comparison of this miracle with that of the draught of fishes in Luke 5: 4–7 supplies various points of contrast, at once bringing out and confirming what we have yet to speak of as the inner meaning of the section before us. Of these the most interesting are that the fishes are all great and good, and numbered; in the earlier narrative we have no such statements. In the earlier, too,

went [1]up, and drew the net to land, full of great
fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all
12 there were so many the net was not rent. Jesus saith
unto them, Come *and* break your fast. And none of
13 the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou?
knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus cometh and
taketh the [2]bread, and giveth them, and the fish like-
14 wise. This is now the third time that Jesus was

[1] Or, *aboard.* [2] Or, *loaf.*

the net was breaking; here 'the net was not rent.' The contrasts all point to the difference between a ministry of trial with a suffering Lord, and a ministry of triumph with a glorified Lord.

Ver. 12. **Jesus saith unto them, Come and breakfast.** The bringing of the fish from the net to the fire is not recorded. The Evangelist hastens to the chief point in his narrative. Jesus gives the invitation to the meal, and it is accepted.—**None of the disciples durst make inquiry of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.** Awe and reverence prevented their asking Jesus who He was (comp. chap. 4: 27). They did what they were told.

Ver. 13. **Jesus cometh and taketh the loaf, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.** We might have expected to read of the 'fishes' rather than the 'fish;' for the meal prepared must have included a portion of the 'fishes' of ver. 10 as well as 'fish' of ver. 9. Yet such is the importance which the Evangelist attaches to the latter that he speaks of it alone, and makes no farther allusion to the rest.

Ver. 14. **This is now a third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was raised from the dead.** It is the third 'manifestation,' although the fourth appearance, of the Risen Lord that has been described. The appearance to Mary Magdalene at 20: 16 is not counted, either because it only embodied the preparatory message as to the state in which Jesus was, or because it was made, not (like the three following) to companies of apostles and disciples, but only to one single disciple. That the present manifestation is stated to be the third does not exclude the other appearances of the Risen Saviour recorded by the earlier Evangelists. It is simply the third in John's own enumeration, the third in that selection of the different manifestations which he had thought it desirable to make. The repetition of the word 'manifested' (comp. ver. 1) is to be noticed as showing that the word is intentionally used. It expresses more than that Jesus showed Himself after His Resurrection. In these manifestations He really revealed Himself out of the entirely new state which had begun at the Resurrection. Just as when 'manifested in the flesh' He was different from what He had been before, and revealed His glory in the garb of weak and suffering manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

humanity, so in His manifestation of Himself at this time He was different from what He had been when clothed with the lowliness which He had assumed for a season. That lowliness has been laid aside; He is still the Man Christ Jesus, but glorified. We see Him now under a new aspect, and at a new point in His history. This consideration will help us to understand the connection of the next two paragraphs of the chapter, and their place in the organism of the Gospel.—Before passing on, however, it is necessary to say a few words upon the inner meaning of this miracle, upon the light in which our Lord Himself intended it to be looked at, and in which it is presented by the Evangelist. Referring our readers to the general remarks made on chap. 2: 11, we observe that here, as there, the miracle must be viewed not only historically, but symbolically. The facts are historical; but they have at the same time much more than simple historical force. They are so arranged and grouped by Him who taught by action as well as word, that they bring out one of the great lessons of His kingdom. Nor can we have any doubt in the present instance what that lesson is. We have before us a picture of the wonderful success which was to follow the apostles when, in the strength of their Risen Lord, they went forth to preach salvation to the whole world, as well as a picture of the joy which they shall share with Him when in this success both He and they 'shall see of the travail of' their 'soul, and shall be satisfied.' Around these thoughts it will be found that all the particulars of the miracle, in their deeper meaning, easily arrange themselves:—the helplessness of these 'fishers of men' when they are without their Lord, their triumphant success whenever they listen to His voice, the invitation given them to come and share in that meal which He has prepared, and whose sacramental character is so strikingly brought out by the mention of the 'fish' and the 'loaf.' Every particular of the scene is full of spiritual meaning; and, even where we may not be able to satisfy ourselves that we have discovered the meaning, we know that it is there, and can rest in the hope that it will by and by be perceived. Perhaps the most difficult point to interpret in this way is the number of the fishes as given in ver. 11. It will be hard for students of this Gospel not to believe that it too has a deeper meaning than that of simple numbers. The whole course of the narrative shows that 153 represents the fulness of the Church, the complete gathering in of all her members, the net not rent, not one believer lost. It is much more difficult to say whence the number 153 is obtained. Many suggestions have been made; but we shall not discuss them. Not one of them can be said to have as yet gained anything like general acceptance. Until a more satisfactory result is reached, it is better to rest satisfied with the general meaning, of which we have already spoken, and as to which no doubt can be entertained.

## Chapter 21: 15–19.

### *The Restoration of Peter and the Re-institution of Christian Witnessing.*

15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of [1]John, [2]lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I [3]love thee. He saith unto him,

[1] Gr. *Joannes.* See chap. 1: 42, margin.

[2] [3] *Love* in these places represents two different Greek words.

### *The Restoration of Peter and the Re-institution of Christian Witnessing,* vers. 15–19.

Contents.—Before speaking of the contents of this paragraph, it is necessary to discover its place in the organism of the chapter. So far as we have seen no successful effort has yet been made to accomplish this. The usual explanation is, that before finally departing, Jesus desired to throw light upon the history and fate of the two leading apostles, Peter and John. Such an explanation is unsatisfactory. Apart from the fact that it is not the manner of John to claim for himself so prominent a position as is thus implied, it is sufficient to observe that, if such be the object, it is not attained. Light, indeed, is cast on the future history of Peter, but none on that of John, which is rather left in a mysterious vagueness, perplexing instead of instructive to the mind. Others, again, pronounce any effort to discover the connection hopeless, unless we regard ver. 14 as a parenthesis; which cannot be done. In proceeding to the explanation which we shall venture to propose. we simply ask our readers to weigh it calmly, and not to reject it because at first sight it may seem to them improbable.—We have already endeavored to show that chap. 21 is an Epilogue to the narrative part of the Gospel, and that it has a general correspondence with the Prologue. But if a correspondence exists as to the whole, it is not unnatural to think that it may also be traced in the several parts. This is rendered still more probable by the circumstance that the parts of each are unquestionably three in number, and that, while the one deals with the pre-existent Logos, and the eternity preceding His Incarnation, the other deals with the Logos after His Resurrection, and the Second Coming. In this latter respect the correspondence between chap. 1: 1–5 and chap. 21: 1–14 is exceedingly close. But at chap. 1 : 6 there is a sudden and unexpected transition to John the Baptist and the witness which he bore to the eternal 'Light,' until the Light itself shone forth and needed such witness no more. In precisely the same manner, then, we have here a sudden and unexpected transition to the apostle Peter, and the witness borne by him to the Incarnate Word, until Jesus shall come the second time, and shall need no more to be proclaimed to men. Such is the general idea which we offer for consideration as to the connection between the first two paragraphs of the present chapter; and when we come to speak of the contents of the next paragraph, this idea will receive much confirmation. In the meantime we pass on to observe that if the correctness of the thought be allowed, it cannot fail to exercise in another respect a powerful influence upon our general apprehen-

16 Feed my lambs. He saith to him again a second

sion of the meaning of the passage before us. For, as the Baptist at chap. 1: 6 is to be regarded as more than an individual—as representative of the whole Old Testament witness to Jesus—so with Peter here. He is representative of all Christian witness to Jesus; and the paragraph deals with more than his re-installation into the apostolic office. It is a re-institution, now made by Jesus in His new estate, of the whole duty of Christian witnessing. Jesus has shown that the banquet which in His state of glory He prepares for His disciples is one consisting of the fruits of successful work in His cause; and now, in the person of Peter, His disciples receive from Him their commission for the work in which they are to bear witness to Him—a work which can only rest on, and be carried out through, love to Himself.

Ver. 15. **When therefore they had breakfasted, Jesus saith to Simon Peter**, etc. The question ('lovest thou') contains the second of the two Greek verbs for loving, of which we have already spoken at 5: 20. This verb is less expressive of emotions of tenderness, of personal feeling and affection, than that verb used by Peter in his reply. The words 'more than these' in our Lord's question can hardly spring from anything else than the remembrance of the apostle's hasty assertion before his denial of his Master: 'Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.' They were thus especially designed to expose to Peter's view the pride and self-sufficiency by which his fall had been hastened; and that they effected this object we may infer from the absence of these words in his reply. He will make no mention of others now; one step in his education has been gained. Not only so; it is to be further noticed that the apostle does not use the same word for 'love' as had been employed by Jesus. He uses one that speaks of a more familiar and friendly affection, implying less depth of serious thought. The change may be connected with his recollection of his fall; but it is to be mainly traced to the genuine sincerity, the real warmth, of his love for Jesus. Jesus accepts the declaration of his love, and recognizes its genuineness, hence the charge now given to the apostle.—**He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.** This charge will be more fully noticed when we have dealt with the exposition of the following verses.

Ver. 16. The same verb ('lovest') which had been used by our Lord in His first question again occurs here, and the question only differs from the first in the gracious omission of the words 'more than these.' Jesus had appreciated the motive which had led Peter in his previous reply to avoid all comparisons between his own love to Jesus and that of others. He accepts the evidence of humility afforded by His apostle, and in that direction at least will no longer test him.—**He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.** Peter's reply is in exactly the same terms as before; the word 'I love' being that which he had previously used, and not that used by Jesus.—**He saith unto him, Be shepherd of my sheep.** See on next verse.

time, Simon, *son* of [1]John, [2]lovest thou me. He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I [3]love thee.
17 He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, [2]lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, [3]Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou [4]knowest that I [2]love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my

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[1] Gr. *Joannes*. See chap. 1: 42, margin.

[2] [3] *Love* in these places represents two different Greek words. [4] Or, *perceivest*.

Ver. 17. In this third question, apparently a repetition of the first and second, one word ('lovest') is changed; for the word which he had used before, Jesus substitutes that less elevated, more familiar word with which Peter had already twice replied: 'I love Thee.' It is this that constitutes to the apostle the painful force of the third question. Not only is his own word taken up by Jesus, but that word is one by which he had sought to give utterance to the strength of his affection. And now Jesus says to him: 'Peter, dost thou really thus love Me as thou sayest? But a little while ago, what was thy denial of thy Friend? Is it otherwise now? I will take thee at thine own word. May I trust thee that, with that love of which thou speakest, thou lovest Me?'—**Peter was grieved**, etc. Peter's grief is at once intelligible, not simply because he had been three times questioned as to his love, but because the third time his own statement, twice made, had been taken up, and he had been asked to consider well whether it was really true, whether he might not be again misjudging himself. But he was not merely grieved, he was also disciplined; his grief was wholesome. Up to this point there seems to have been some faint trace of self in his replies: at all events, he had stood before his Lord as if his Lord were peculiarly reading *him:* he had not wholly forgotten himself. Now, however, all his past weakness and sin rise to his view: can he who has been so guilty have any special value? Surely not: if he is known, he is known only as one of 'all things;' with such emptiness of self he will cast himself upon his Lord, and only say: 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou seest that I love Thee.' The victory of grace is complete, and he receives his final charge.—**Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.** We have still to say a word or two of the three-fold charge which is given in the words: 'Feed my lambs,' 'Be shepherd of my sheep,' 'Feed my sheep.' It is a little doubtful whether we ought to understand by the 'lambs' the younger members of the Christian community, or the whole flock in its weakest and most elementary stage of Christian growth: the contrast with 'sheep' leads upon the whole to the former view. The charge to the apostle is, 'Feed' these lambs; not less than the older members of the flock do they require the

18 sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

shepherd's most thoughtful as well as his most tender care. After this we have 'sheep' twice mentioned (for a slight difference of reading found in some ancient manuscripts does not materially affect the meaning), and the only point we have to consider is the difference between 'Be shepherd of' and 'Feed.' The structural principles of the Gospel at once tell that there is a climax; and that climax seems to correspond to the gradation exemplified by a pastor as he himself grows in knowledge and experience. At first he is eager to perform all offices for his flock, thinking all equally important; perhaps even most pleased with the rule that has been assigned to him, and in which his own importance most appears. But soon, if he has the sprit of a real shepherd, he learns that to bear rule is comparatively a small thing, and that to 'feed' the flock of God, to nourish it on pastures ever fresh, and with waters ever living, is at once his most difficult and his noblest task.—Peter is now ready to hear what, in tending his Master's flock, he is to do and suffer.

Ver. 18. Our readers may call to mind, that 'girding' was the preliminary to crucifixion. The words, 'verily, verily,' with which the verse begins, mark, as always, the importance and solemnity of the declaration made, and thus prepare us to think that we have more in them than a simple announcement of the death which the apostle was to die. Again, the use of the word 'girded,' although not the compound of ver. 7, but the simple verb, reminds us so much of the action of this latter verse, where the metaphorical meaning is obviously prominent in the writer's mind, as to lead here also to the thought of metaphor. Again, the use of the word 'walkedst' (comp. chaps. 6: 66; 8: 12; 11: 9, 10; 12: 35), which in its literal signification is not well adapted to express the free activity of youth, suggests a figurative interpretation of the passage. Once more, the mention of the stretching out of the hands before the carrying away is spoken of, is fatal to a merely literal meaning; for such stretching out of the hands cannot be looked on as a necessary preliminary to girding, whereas it would be a natural action on the part of those who willingly submitted to their fate, and who were desirous to help rather than hinder officials in the discharge of their duty. We seem, therefore, compelled to adopt a metaphorical interpretation of the words. When we do so, all difficulties disappear. The allusion to the time when Peter girded himself and walked whither he would, becomes the expression of that self-will by which, before his present entire consecration to the service of Jesus, he had been marked. Now, however, his self-will shall be crucified; the old nature which sought

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

only its own gratification shall be as completely powerless as is the body of one nailed to a cross: he will be so truly a partaker of the sufferings of Christ as to find in this fellowship with his dying Lord the very *ground and beginning* of his apostolic activity. Then he will 'stretch out his hands,' will assume the attitude of one who is giving himself up to another's guidance, and will resign himself entirely to the disposal of that 'other,' to whose will his own has been subdued. Then, too, 'another' will gird him, that is, will gird him in the sense in which the word has just been used, will equip him for his task. Finally, another will 'bring' (not carry) 'him whither he would not;' will lead him in paths that he would not himself have chosen—will guide him to fields of activity in which he shall joyfully submit himself to Him who immediately adds: 'Follow Me.' The question may be asked: Who then is the 'other' spoken of? The only answer seems to be that it is the 'other' of chap. 5: 32; that is, God (comp. also 4: 38).

Ver. 19. **But this said he, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God.** It is impossible to deny that in these words the Evangelist refers to 'death' in the ordinary sense of the term. If, then, we consider (1) the peculiar expressions used in the last verse; (2) the tradition of the Church (usually regarded as worthy of trust), that Peter died by crucifixion; and (3) the fact that at the time when the words were written, Peter's death must have been long past; it is at once to be admitted that the Evangelist applies ver. 18, in the first instance at least, to the actual crucifixion of Peter. But it is not necessary to suppose that *all* the clauses of the verse refer to the literal crucifixion, or that the meaning of any of them is exhausted by that fact (comp. 12: 32, 33). The singular words: 'he should glorify God,' confirm the interpretation we have given. There is no evidence that at this early stage of Christian history this expression was used for martyrdom. It cannot therefore be explained in the light of martyrdom alone. We must compare such passages as 12: 28; 13: 31; 14: 13; 15: 8; 17: 1, 4; and, doing so, we learn that the death of Peter is not viewed simply as the closing act of his career, but as an act in which that second life of his, which had been spoken of in ver. 18, reached its culminating point. Thus there is nothing in ver. 19 limiting ver. 18 to that act of crucifixion which the several clauses of the verse compel us to pass.—**And when he had said this, he saith unto him, Follow me.** To confine the meaning of the words 'Follow me' to the literal following of Jesus on the present occasion—as if all their import were that Jesus had gone forward a few steps, telling Peter to come after Him—is so much out of keeping with the sense in which similar words are used even in the earlier Gospels, and so much more out of keeping with the style of

## CHAPTER 21: 20–23.

### *The Termination of the Toil and Suffering of Christian Witness-Bearing.*

20 Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth

John, that such an interpretation hardly needs to be refuted. That, indeed, our Lord did move forward, and that He meant Peter to follow Him, is highly probable, especially from ver. 20. But this is certainly not the whole meaning. The external following foreshadows an imitation of Christ in His accomplishment of the Father's will, and His drinking of the cup put into his hands by the Father, until, in the one case as in the other, the cross itself is reached.

### *The Termination of the Toil and Suffering of Christian Witness-Bearing,* vers. 20–23.

CONTENTS.—The effort to introduce the passage now before us into organic unity with the rest of the chapter has certainly been attended with as much difficulty and as little success as in the case of the second paragraph. Without dwelling upon the opinion of others, we regard this third paragraph of the Epilogue of the Gospel as the counterpart of the third paragraph of the Prologue (chap. 1: 14–18). That paragraph is occupied with the coming of Him who in the second paragraph had been borne witness to before His Incarnation by Old Testament prophecy. He is indeed expressly spoken of in prophecy as 'He who is to come;' and when He comes, preparatory witnessing exists no more. Here in like manner Jesus in effect speaks of Himself as the One 'who is to come;' at all events, twice over the words 'until I come' are used (vers. 22, 23). The 'coming' is thus shown to be a prominent thought of the passage; and its correspondence with the 'coming' of the Prologue must strike every one. The contents of this paragraph, therefore, are not to give us information about the future of John as an individual—information which they do give; but they are designed to call our thoughts to the termination of Christian witnessing, which will at length, with all its labors and sufferings, close in the joy of the Second Coming of the Lord. The special interpretation of the verses will confirm this view.

Ver. 20. It is impossible to think that the Evangelist intends us to confine our attention to the literal details given in this verse. The long description by which he indicates himself would be entirely out of place were he brought before us as simply taking a few steps after Jesus and Peter. Besides this, the verb 'to follow,' which, as we have seen, was used metaphorically as well as literally in ver. 19, must certainly be understood in the same sense here. John is here not simply the individual; he is the apostle following Peter in apostolic work, and, like him, representative (though in a different aspect) of all Christian laborers and witnesses What the difference of aspect is, is shown by the special manner in which he describes himself.

21 thee? Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord,
22 [1]and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him,

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[1] Gr. *and this man, what?*

He is not only the 'disciple whom Jesus loved;' he is the apostle who 'leaned back on the breast of Jesus at the supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?' (13: 12, 25). In other words, he is the apostle whose mind was nearest to the mind of Jesus, and whom Jesus found most fitted to receive the deeper revelations of His will. John, then, represents an entirely different aspect of Christian witnessing from that represented by Peter. The latter represents the struggle, and the death at the end of it, by which God is glorified. The other represents patient waiting for the glorious revelation of Jesus at His second coming.

Vers. 21, 22. **Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what of this man?** It was a natural question. Although Peter did not know the full meaning of the words just addressed to himself, he felt that they betokened trial, sorrow, perhaps even prison and death. When, therefore, he saw John following Jesus, nothing would more readily occur to him than to ask, And what, Lord, shall be his fate? Yet the answer of Jesus evidently implies that there was something not altogether to be commended in the spirit or in the tone of Peter's question. We cannot imagine that such an answer would have been given to a question in which affectionate interest was the leading feature. We have indeed no reason to think that the question was dictated by envy, but there was probably impatience of the calm spirit of John, of that calmness which had immediately before contrasted so strikingly with his own impetuosity, — for when he had thrown himself into the sea to hasten to his Master, John had remained in the boat dragging to the shore the net with fishes. To this spirit accordingly Jesus replies.—**Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he abide till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.** In other words: 'Thou hast no right to be impatient of the quiet and meditative spirit of thy brother Apostle. True, I have spoken to thee of heavy trials only. But it does not follow that he may not have his own trials, in the work given him to do. Thou art right, I praise thy spirit, only preparing thee for the inevitable consequences. But his spirit is right, too. Let it be *thy* concern' ('thou' is emphatic) 'to follow Me: and as for him, if I will that he abide till I come, what is that to thee?' By the 'coming' here spoken of can be understood nothing but the Second Coming of the Lord. It is the object of Jesus, as we shall see more fully on ver. 26, to give emphasis to the thought of His Second Coming, that He may thus bring out the truth that then shall be the end of all toil and waiting,—that then His witnesses shall rest from their labors, with their works following them. At the same time we would not venture wholly to exclude the thought of the destruction of Jerusalem. But the relation of that event to the 'coming of the Lord' is a topic upon

If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to
23 thee? follow thou me. This saying therefore went
forth among the brethren, that that disciple should
not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should
not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what
*is that* to thee?

which we cannot enter here. The point of the contrast then between the words spoken respectively to Peter and John, is not that between a violent death by martyrdom and a peaceful departure; but that between impetuous and struggling apostleship, ending in a violent death and quiet, thoughtful, meditative waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus, ending in a peaceful transition to the heavenly repose. Neither Peter nor himself is to the Evangelist a mere individual, Each is a type of one aspect of apostolic working,—of Christian witnessing for Jesus to the very end of time. But the struggling witnesses are impatient of such as are meditative, the active of the passive, the warring of the waiting. They do not see that the work of the latter is not less important than their own, and that it touches the very springs of the Church's life. They undervalue it, because its struggle is not visible enough. They cry, 'This work, Lord, is it really like our work, work for Thee?' And Jesus replies, 'I judge of that. If I will that it go on until I come, what is that to you? Your path is clear; follow ye me.'

Ver. 23. **This word therefore went forth among the brethren, That disciple dieth not. Yet Jesus said not unto him, He dieth not; but, If I will that he abide till I come, what is that to thee?** Having reported the answer of Jesus, the Evangelist is constrained to correct a misapprehension of its meaning which had prevailed in the Church. At the same time his giving again the words of Jesus in the same form as before shows the great importance which he attached to them, and leads to the belief that something in them had for him a peculiar charm. If so, the words that attracted him could only be 'till I come.' It is the thought of this Second Coming that John finds to be the prominent point in the words of his Master. He beholds in them the assurance that there was an end fixed for all toil and suffering incurred in the task of witnessing for Jesus, when the Redeemer whom he loved will come again and take His disciples to Himself, that where He is there they also may be (14: 3).

## CHAPTER 21: 24, 25.

### *The Close of the Gospel.*

24 This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

*The Close of the Gospel*, vers. 24, 25.

CONTENTS.—The two verses before us bring the Gospel to a close. Their authenticity has been much disputed; and not a few who accept the rest of the chapter as John's, refuse to admit that they are the production of his pen. Both external and internal evidence forbid our passing upon them so sweeping a condemnation. Ver. 25 is certainly authentic, and the force added to it, when thus viewed in its Johannine character, will, we trust, appear in the commentary. It is more difficult to speak of ver. 24. To accept the whole of it as our Evangelist seems impossible. A passage in his Third Epistle has indeed been appealed to (ver. 12): but there the true reading is, 'We also bear witness, and *thou knowest* that our witness is true.' The difficulty in the verse before us does not lie in the plural pronoun 'we:' it is perfectly conceivable that the Evangelist might write 'we know' even if referring to himself alone. But it seems to us inconceivable that in one and the same sentence he should write, of himself, '*This is the disciple who witnesseth* . . .' and '*We knew* that *his* witness is true.' We must conclude, therefore, that the last clause of the verse was written by the elders of Ephesus, or other Christians of influence there; and the only question is, whether this clause alone or the whole verse is to be traced to them. If the whole verse be their addition, it must have been intercalated because they wished to explain who the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' was. The word 'this' would then refer to him as the writer of the Gospel, who was well known in Ephesus to be no other than the Apostle John: the apostle and the 'disciple' are thus identified. On the other hand, the addition made by the Ephesian elders may begin with the words 'and we know.' In this case the appended words are to be regarded as the almost involuntary expression of their confidence in and admiration of one whose Gospel differed so much from the earlier Gospels that some may have doubted how it would be received. The first part of the verse will on this view be John's own statement; and its similarity to chap. 19: 35 is a mark of genuineness. The question at issue is thus reduced within very narrow limits.

Ver. 24. **This is the disciple who witnesseth concerning these things, and wrote these things.** The use of the present tense, 'witnesseth,' seems to point out John as the writer of these words; any other would probably have written 'witnessed,' in conformity with the word that follows, 'wrote.' The word 'witnesseth' is used with great solemnity, and in the sense which it commonly bears (comp. note on chap. 1: 7) in this Gospel. The writer means more than that the things stated by him are true; he is uttering a Divine testimony to their inner reality and value. By his witnessing he claims to be more than a historian: he proclaims himself a prophet of God, commissioned to announce great verities to men.—'These things'

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

must be understood to refer not only to the things spoken of in this chapter, but to the Gospel as a whole. The analogous passage in chap. 20: 30, together with ver. 25 of the present chapter, renders this interpretation absolutely necessary.—**And we know that his witness is true.** As has been already said, it seems to us best to regard these words as an addition made by the elders of Ephesus. They could not fail to notice how different this Gospel was from its predecessors. It might seem to them that hesitation would be felt in receiving it, and they stamp it with their authenticating seal. Or, if such were not their motive, the words may be little more than a kind of involuntary breathing out of their awe and wonder, as again and again they brought the reading of this Gospel to a close.

Ver. 25. We have already expressed our belief that these are the words of no other than John himself. They seem to contain the Evangelist's own explanation of that principle of *selection* which he has followed throughout his work. To have given a complete history of the facts of Christ's life would have been impossible. He has chosen those only which bore upon his particular aim. It has been usual to describe this verse as a strong hyperbole. But is it not at once more reverent and more true to say that the language here used expresses the infinitude which the apostle beheld in the life of Jesus,—the fathomless depths which he knew his Lord's every work and every word to contain? And we may ask, as we read these words, What apostle or disciple of Jesus, known to us as belonging to the first age of the Christian Church, could have so spoken but that apostle whom Jesus loved? In no part of his work does he expressly name himself, nor is this necessary. He is named by almost every line that he has written, by almost every touch of the pencil with which he has drawn his picture. Let us imitate his example; and, instead of closing with the thought of the servant, close rather with the thought of the Master whose eternal existence was taught us by the first, and whose infinite fulness is now taught us by the last words of this Gospel.

## APPENDIX TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

### CHAPTER 7: 53—8: 11.

### *The Woman taken in Adultery.*

53 [1][And they went every man unto his own house:
8: 1, 2 but Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And
early in the morning he came again into the temple,

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[1] Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7: 56—8: 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other.

*The Woman taken in Adultery*, chap. 7: 53—8: 11.

CONTENTS.—The almost unanimous voice of modern criticism pronounces the narrative before us to be no genuine part of the Gospel of John. The section is wanting in the oldest and most trustworthy MSS. of the Gospel, and in several of the most ancient versions. It is passed by without notice in the commentaries of some of the earliest and most critical fathers of the Church. It is marked by an unusually large number of various readings—a circumstance always highly suspicious. It is full of expressions not found elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, some of the chief of which will be noticed in the comment. It interrupts the flow of the section where it occurs—chap. 8: 12 connecting itself directly with that part of chap. 7 which closes with ver. 52. Finally, MSS. which contain the section introduce it at various places—some at the close of the Gospel; others after chap. 7: 36; while in a third class it has no place in John at all, but is read in the Gospel of Luke, at the close of chap. 21. These considerations are decisive; and the narrative must be set aside as no part of the work in which it occurs. How the section found its way into the placé which it now occupies it is impossible to say. Varions conjectures, more or less plausible, have been offered on the point; but all of them are destitute of proof.—It does not follow, however, that the incident itself is not true. We know that an incident, very similar to this, probably indeed the same, was related in the early Apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews; and this circumstance lends probability to the belief that the events actually happened. But the great argument in favor of the truth of the story is afforded by the character of the narrative itself. It bears the unmistakable impress of a wisdom which could not have originated with the men of our Lord's time, and which (as is shown by the objections often made to it) the world even in our own time hardly comprehends. It may be noted in addition that the incident bears in its spirit a striking similarity to that recorded in Mark 12: 13–17 (Matt. 22: 15–22; Luke 20: 20–26). Bishop Lightfoot adduces strong evidence to show that the story was one of the illustrative anecdotes of Papias (*Contemp. Review*, vol. xxvi., p. 847). If so, it must have been in circulation from the very earliest times.

Ver. 53. **And they went each one unto his own house.** The first words of the section confirm the doubts which we have expressed as to its genuineness. They are not a natural mode of describing the breaking up of the Sanhedrin which had been in assembly (ver. 45); and no other persons have been mentioned to whom it is possible to apply them.

Ver. 1. **But Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.** No

and all the people came unto him; and he sat down
3 and taught them. And the scribes and the Pharisees
bring a woman taken in adultery; and having set her
4 in the midst, they say unto him, [1]Master, this woman

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[1] Or, *Teacher.*

mention is made of the Mount of Olives in any other passage of the Fourth Gospel, but it is more than once spoken of in the Gospel of Luke as a place to which Jesus was wont to retire at the close of His daily labors in Jerusalem during the Passion week. He could thus pass from the hurry and confusion of a large city to the solitude of a hillside or of its retiring hollows, where the sense of peace is deepened by the thought of the busy life which is so near at hand. It is probable that our Lord intended to spend the whole night upon the Mount; and it may be that He would spend it as He did before making choice of His twelve apostles, 'in prayer to God,' (Luke 6: 12).

Ver. 2. **And at dawn he came again into the temple-courts, and all the people came unto him, and he sat down and taught them.** With the return of day Jesus resumed His teaching of the people; and they, on their part, seem to have been powerfully attracted by His words. According to the custom of the time, He sat with His hearers gathered round Him. The custom may be observed in Turkish mosques at the present day. The sitting of Jesus while teaching is not mentioned elsewhere in this Gospel. (Comp. for it, Matt. 5: 1; Mark 9: 35).

Ver. 3. **And the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery; and making her stand in the midst. . . .** For the 'Pharisees,' comp. on chap. 1: 24: for the 'scribes,' on Matt. 7: 29. John nowhere else mentions the scribes: they are frequently conjoined with the Pharisees in the earlier Gospels (Matt. 5: 20, Mark 7: 5; Luke 6: 7, etc.). The scene described in the words before us must have been in a high degree impressive and exciting. The people are still gathered around Jesus and listening intently to His words, when suddenly His discourse is interrupted by the religious authorities of the land, who force their way through the crowd dragging the unhappy culprit along with them,—their faces bearing all the marks of eager passion to entrap the object of their hatred; their hands (as will appear more clearly from ver. 7) already grasping the stones by which they would at least indicate their conviction of the woman's guilt; their words, even before they reach the Saviour, sending a thrill of horror through the multitude,—'she has been taken in the very act.' Without the slightest feeling of compunction, they compel the woman to stand in the midst of the throng, and then they address themselves to Jesus.

Ver. 4. **They say unto him, Teacher, this woman hath been taken committing adultery, in the very act.** Not only was the sin grievous: the point is that there was no possibility of de-

5 hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. Now
in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what
6 then sayest thou of her? And this they said, [1] tempting him, that they might have *whereof* to accuse him.
But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote

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[1] Or, *trying.*

nying it. No process of proof was necessary: there was no need to summon witnesses. We may even well believe that the very countenance of the woman would betray her own consciousness of her shame.

Ver. 5. **Now in the law Moses commanded to stone such: what therefore sayest thou concerning her?** The words 'concerning her,'—which do not occur in the Authorized Version, but which the best authorities lead us to accept,—throw light upon the scene. It is not a mere abstract contrast between Moses and a new Lawgiver that is before us: it is a special case. By the way in which Jesus deals with *this* woman shall the end of His enemies be gained. The law of Moses expressly decreed death by *stoning* only to a betrothed virgin who proved faithless, and to her seducer (Deut. 22: 23, 24). It has been inferred, therefore, that this woman was only betrothed, not married. The supposition is unnecessary. It is enough to remember that adultery (in the ordinary sense of the word) was punishable with death: and that, in a case of violation of the Sabbath, the Divine command to punish the trangressor with *death* was interpreted to mean putting him to death by *stoning* (Num. 15: 35). We need thus have no hesitation in believing that the same mode of punishment would be applied to all sins similar in character to that which alone has the penalty of stoning expressly attached to it. It is hardly possible to pass by without notice the singular italicized clause of the present Authorized Version at the end of ver. 6, '*as though he heard them not.*' The clause is intended for a translation of certain words of the Complutensian text which Stephens adopted in his editions of A. D. 1546 and 1549, but *not* in that of 1550, which became the *Textus Receptus.* The words are not found in any early English Version, neither in Wycliffe nor Tyndale, nor Coverdale, nor the Great Bible, nor the two Genevan Versions. They are also absent from the Rheims Version of A. D. 1582. They first occur in the Bishops' Bible. In the Version of A. D. 1611 they are not printed in italics. Dr. Scrivener says that they were not italicized earlier than A. D. 1769.

Ver. 6. **But this they said tempting him, that they might have whereof to accuse him.** In what, it may be asked, did the 'tempting' lie? The common answer is that, if Jesus pronounced for the sparing of the woman, His enemies would raise an outcry against Him as contradicting Moses: that if, on the contrary, He pronounced her worthy of death, they would accuse Him to the Roman Government as usurping powers which belonged to it alone.

7 on the ground. But when they continued asking
him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He
that is without sin among you, let him first cast a
8 stone at her. And again he stooped down, and with
9 his finger wrote on the ground. And they, when
they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from

The explanation thus given is no doubt to a large extent correct. But the supposition is also possible that these scribes and Pharisees were not thinking of a calm judicial sentence which, if it suited their purpcse, they might report to the Romans. They may have thought of a sentence to be executed at the moment. There before them was the guilty one; the crowd was round about her,—was even pressing upon her in all the excitement which the circumstances could not fail to awaken. Will Jesus reply to their question, No? They will instantly rouse the multitude against Him as contradicting Moses. Will He reply, Yes? They will stone the woman on the spot. Then the Roman Government will itself interpose, and Jesus will be seized as the instigator of the deed of blood.—**But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.** Jesus will not heed them at the first: it will lend more weight to His reply if it be not too quickly given. We are not to imagine that what He wrote was a sentence to be pronounced. He was not thus to assume the office of a judge. What He wrote was probably some text or precept of Divine truth which, had He not been interrupted, He would have proceeded to explain to the people. Such writing on the ground is still to be met with on the part of teachers in the East.

Ver. 7. **But when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast the stone upon her.** The scribes and Pharisees press for an answer. Then Jesus lifted Himself up (as we may well believe) with slow and solemn dignity, and spoke the words recorded of Him with a glance which must have showed His hearers that He read their hearts. They had no *official* right to condemn the woman; and our Lord's words embodied the truth, which finds always, as it found now, an answer in the heart of man, that we have no personal right to judge the guilty unless we ourselves are free from blame. There seems no reason to confine the thought of 'sin' here to the particular sin with which the woman was chargeable; the expression is quite general. It is from the mention of 'the stone' that we may draw the conclusion that the woman's accusers had stones in their hands.

Ver. 8. **And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.** Jesus returned to His writing on the ground, and left His words to sink into the hearts of His hearers.

Ver. 9. **But they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning at the elder.** It was a correct comment on their state when the words 'being convicted by their own conscience'

the eldest, *even* unto the last; and Jesus was left alone,
and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And
10 Jesus lifted up himself, and said unto her, Woman,
where are they? did no man condemn thee? And she
11 said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I con-
demn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more.]

found their way into the text. They felt how entirely they had misapprehended the relation in which sinners ought to stand to sinners. They were brought to a conception of morality of which they had never dreamed. They learned that they could only vindicate that law upon which they prided themselves by purity of heart. They who came to condemn Jesus went away self-condemned, because He had opened their eyes to that spirit of the law which is so much greater than the letter.—**And Jesus was left alone, and the woman who was in the midst.** Nothing has been said of the departure of 'the people' (ver. 2). We may therefore suppose that they were still around Jesus and the woman; but they are silent and awe-struck. To all intents Jesus is alone with the woman. He reads her heart, as if His thoughts were concentrated upon her; and she can see none but Him.

Ver. 10. **And Jesus lifted up himself, and said unto her, Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?** The word 'condemn,' for which it is not possible to substitute another, conveys most imperfectly the sense of the original Greek. The meaning is rather: 'Doth no man doom thee to the sentence of which they spoke?'

Ver. 11. **And she said, No man, Lord.** Her answer is a simple statement of the fact. Perhaps the word 'Lord' may indicate the deep impression of the greatness of Jesus that had been made upon her mind.—**And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from this time sin no more.** The word 'I' is peculiarly emphatic. The language, it will be observed, is not a sentence of acquittal; it is rather an intimation to the woman that she has still space given her for repentance and faith. Let her use her opportunities, and profit by the tender compassion of Him who drew publicans and sinners to His side, then will still more gracious words be addressed to her. Instead of 'Go thy way, from this time sin no more,' she will receive the joyful sentence: 'Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.'—We are told nothing of the effect produced upon the woman by the remarkable scene in which she had borne a part. But every reader must feel how worthy of Him who 'came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them,' were the words of Jesus upon this occasion. The narrative has lived on through all ages of the Church as an illustration, not less striking than any other recorded in the Gospels, of that Divine wisdom with which Jesus knew how to combine what human wisdom has never been able to unite—condemnation of sin and free and unrestricted mercy to the sinner.

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